THE NEW INDIAN EXPRESS

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Liam Livingstone

IPL: ALL-ROUNDERS & PACERS BREAK BANK

While it looked like some teams were in trouble after Day One, by the end of the auction most sides have managed to put together a competitive squad

₹11.5 Cr

Liam Livingstone (PBKS)

HIGHEST BUYS ON SUNDAY

Tim David	₹8.25 Cr	MI
Jofra Archer	₹8 Cr	MI
Odean Smith	₹6 Cr	PBKS
Khaleel Ahmed	₹5.25 Cr	DC
Chetan Sakariya	₹4.2 Cr	DC
Marco Jansen	₹4.2 Cr	SRH
Shivam Dube	₹4 Cr	CSK
Chris Jordan	₹3.6 Cr	CSK
Yash Dayal	₹3.2 Cr	GT
David Miller	₹3 Cr	GT

CURIOUS CASE OF JOFRA ARCHER

- English pacer Jofra Archer, who is currently injured, included himself in the auction list at the last minute
- It was declared that he will not be available for this year and the team that picks him will not get any replacement
- Mumbai Indians waited patiently, saving money for the world class pacer, and literally outbid all franchises, adding Archer to a squad that already has Jasprit Bumrah | P11

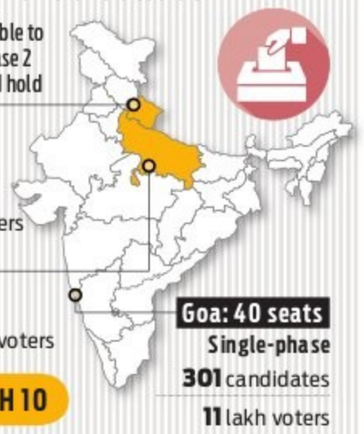
₹551.7 Cr

10 TEAMS CUMULATIVELY SPENT ₹551.7 Cr TO BUY 204 PLAYERS IN THE AUCTION. AMONG THEM 137 WERE INDIANS AND 67 OVERSEAS.

CHENNAI • MADURAI • VIJAYAWADA • BENGALURU • KOCHI • HYDERABAD • VISAKHAPATNAM • COIMBATORE • KOZHIKODE • THIRUVANANTHAPURAM • BELAGAVI • BHUBANESWAR • SHIVAMOGGA • MANGALURU • TIRUPATI • TIRUCHY • TIRUNELVELI • SAMBALPUR • HUBBALLI • DHARMAPURI • KOTTAYAM • KANNUR • VILLUPURAM • KOLLAM • TADEPALLIGUDEM • NAGAPATTINAM • THRISSUR • KALABURAGI

Button day in three states

Close to three crore people are eligible to vote on Monday as UP holds its phase 2 elections and Goa and Uttarakhand hold their single-phase election



Uttarakhand: 70 seats
Single-phase
632 candidates | **81** lakh voters

Uttar Pradesh: 55 seats
Phase two of seven
586 candidates | **2.01** crore voters

Goa: 40 seats
Single-phase
301 candidates
11 lakh voters

COUNTING DAY: MARCH 10

KARNATAKA GEARS UP TO REOPEN SCHOOLS TODAY

Ban orders around schools in Mysuru, Udupi to prevent protests

EXPRESS NEWS SERVICE
@Bengaluru

AS the state gets ready to reopen schools on Monday, the police, district administration and education department officials were on full alert to ensure that the process is trouble-free and is not marred by protests over the hijab controversy.

The police in Mysuru and Udupi districts clamped Section 144 and banned congregations of people in a 300-metre radius of educational institutions to avoid protests over hijab row.

Chief Minister Basavaraj Bommai, who was in Hubballi, said the police are keeping an eye on social media sites to ensure that false and incendiary statements are not uploaded provoking students and others. Strict action will be taken against such miscreants, he warned.

While the state geared up to contain the situation, Karnataka Wakf Board Chairman Maulana Shafi Saadi made his own effort to ensure peace in a communally charged atmosphere. He met Siddaganga Mutt pontiff Sri Siddalinga Swamiji at Tumakuru on Sunday and the two discussed ways to sort out the issue harmoniously and to resurrect the image of the state as a land of peace.

Karnataka Wakf Board Chairman Maulana Shafi Saadi (second from right) calls on Siddaganga Mutt pontiff Sri Siddalinga Swamiji in Tumakuru on Sunday

The hijab issue is before the High Court and it would be better to maintain peace till the verdict is pronounced

HD Deve Gowda, JDS supremo

Shafi said miscreants from both communities have escalated the issue. "Religious leaders from all sections should work towards putting an end to the row after the Karnataka High Court passes its verdict," he added.

Meanwhile, former Prime Minister and JDS supremo HD Deve Gowda said the issue could have been resolved through dialogue by leaders of national parties, instead of them trying to gain political mileage out of it.

Telangana Chief Minister K Chandrashekhar Rao too took up the hijab row to attack the BJP government at the Centre. He said the BJP government "has to be sent out as early as possible". FULL REPORTS: P4

DRAFT PAPERS FILED FOR LIC IPO, ISSUE LIKELY IN MARCH

5%

Govt to sell 5% of its stake in LIC in India's largest IPO

₹5.39 LAKH CROREE

is LIC's embedded value as per DRHP

CRUCIAL FOR GOVT

The public issue is crucial for the government to meet its revised divestment target of ₹78,000 crore

EXPRESS NEWS SERVICE @New Delhi

GOVERNMENT-OWNED life insurance giant Life Insurance Corporation (LIC) of India on Sunday moved one step closer to becoming a publicly traded company as it filed the draft papers for its initial public offering (IPO). After Sebi's approval, the issue is likely to hit the markets in March.

As per the draft papers known as the draft red herring prospectus (DRHP), up to 31,62,49,885 (31.62 crore) equity shares, representing the government's 5% equity, are on offer.

LIC's embedded value, a key valuation metric, has been pegged at ₹5.39 lakh crore as of September end by international actuarial firm Milliman Advisors.

According to the DRHP, the mega issue is to be managed by 10 book-running lead managers — SBI Caps, Kotak Mahindra Capital, ICICI Securities, Axis Capital, JM Financial, Goldman Sachs, JPMorgan, Citigroup, Nomura, and Bank of America Securities. The insurer would not offer any shares under pre-IPO placement. LIC reported a profit after tax of ₹1,437 crore in the six months through September 2021, while its revenue stood at ₹3.4 lakh crore. It had reported operating profit (profit before tax) of ₹2,980 crore in FY21.

LAUNCH

ISRO TO PUT 3 SATELLITES INTO ORBIT

The space organisation will launch a radar imaging satellite and two co-passenger satellites in Sriharikota on Monday | P5

High-decibel polls in Goa, U'khand; phase II in UP

EXPRESS NEWS SERVICE
@New Delhi

WITH a strong narrative built around issues such as farmers' protests, agriculture, caste, communal polarisation and Covid-19, the stage is set for the second phase of polling covering 55 Assembly constituencies across nine districts in UP on Monday.

Also going to polls on Monday are Uttarakhand and Goa, where polling will be held in a single phase. All three states are ruled by the BJP. The fate of four cabinet ministers will be decided in this phase. They are finance minister Suresh Khanna, Gulabo Devi, Baldev Singh Aulakh and Mahesh Chandra Gupta.

Another battle to watch is in Rampur, where SP stalwart and MP Azam Khan's fate is at stake. He is in jail since February 2020 in connection with a series of criminal and civil cases. The BJP has fielded Akash Saxena, who was behind lodging many complaints against Azam. The districts going to polls on Monday have a reasonable chunk of Muslim voters.

In Uttarakhand, the BJP had won 57 of 70 seats in 2017 and Congress 11. Political analysts say this time, the performance of BJP and Congress will depend on how other players, including the Aam Admi Party, fare. Also, the hill state has a history of Independent MLAs playing the role of kingmakers.

The BJP's decision to deny a ticket to Utpal Parrikar, son of former CM Manohar Parrikar, is echoing across the state. Contesting as an Independent, Utpal is hurting the BJP's narrative. BJP has fielded candidates in all 40 seats. The saffron party may benefit from the split in Opposition votes.

Cash, gold worth ₹11 cr seized in UP

Unaccounted cash, precious metals, illicit liquor and drugs totalling over ₹11 crore have been seized since January in UP districts where polls are to be held

Didi dials Stalin, calls for meeting of non-BJP CMs

EXPRESS NEWS SERVICE @Chennai/Hyderabad/New Delhi

THE idea to float a national alliance against the BJP gained considerable traction on Sunday with Trinamool supremo and West Bengal chief minister Mamata Banerjee proposing a meeting of chief ministers of opposition-ruled states.

Confirming the development, DMK leader and Tamil Nadu chief minister M K Stalin said that Mamata had spoken to him over phone earlier in the day expressing anguish at the "brazen misuse of power" by the governors of states ruled by non-BJP parties. Hours later, Telangana Chief Minister K Chandrasekhar Rao also stepped in, to harden the fight against the BJP.

"She suggested a meeting of Opposition CMs. I assured her of DMK's commitment to uphold State autonomy. Convention of Opposition CMs will soon happen out of Delhi!" tweeted Stalin. Earlier, the DMK leader and West Bengal Governor Jagdeep Dhankhar had engaged in a war of words following the latter's proroguing the state Assembly. While Stalin condemned the Governor's decision saying it was against the established norms and conventions, Dhankhar hit back asking the Tamil Nadu CM to check the facts before using harsh remarks against the governor of another state. P5

EXPRESS READ

Bank frauds of ₹5.35Lcr in Modi era: Rahul

New Delhi: Congress leader Rahul Gandhi on Sunday alleged that bank frauds to the tune of Rs 5.35 lakh crore have taken place under the BJP government. "Bank frauds of Rs 5,35,000 crore have happened so far during the Modi era — in 75 years there has never been such a fraud with the money of people of India," Gandhi said on Twitter.

Ahead of civic polls, 3 BJP leaders rejoin TMC

Kolkata: Three BJP leaders, who had withdrawn their nominations for polls to the Garulia Municipality in West Bengal, on Sunday made their way back to the Trinamool Congress, over the saffron party's style of functioning. Former MLA Sunil Singh, his son Aditya and Garulia Municipality ex-chairperson Saurabh Singh had withdrawn their nominations on Saturday.

NATIONWIDE	FEB 12	FEB 13	KARNATAKA	FEB 12	FEB 13
Fresh cases	50,407	44,877	Fresh cases	3,202	2,372
Recoveries	1,36,962	1,17,591	Recoveries	8,988	5,395
Deaths	804	684	Deaths	38	27

Farmers to lay siege to Soudha today

BANSY KALAPPA @Bengaluru

AS the legislature session begins on Monday, members of the Karnataka Rajya Raitha Sangha and Hasiru Sene are planning to lay siege to Vidhana Soudha, demanding that the state government repeal its ordinances on farm laws.

Raitha Sangha leader Kodihalli Chandrashekar on Sunday said that while the Centre withdrew the three farm laws, the state government is dilly-dallying. The issue was brought to the notice of Chief Minister Basavaraj Bommai during the last legislature session in Belagavi and he agreed to take it up during the Bengaluru session. But the government has not set in motion any decision to nullify these pieces of legislation. P4

LOST GLORY

Shrinking strength mars Mysuru Police Band's melody

ASHWINI M SRIPAD @Bengaluru

IN 2008, Dr APJ Abdul Kalam, a former President by then, was at Vidhana Soudha to launch a State Government initiative. At the event, Kalam was captivated as he listened for 20 mins to a team of Mysuru Police Band playing instruments in a corner.

Over a period of time, the Mysuru Police Band, with a rich history of around 160 years, has been witnessing depleted strength due to lack of periodic recruitment, damaging the quality of the music.

The team is in Bengaluru to take part in the Joint Legislative session on Monday, which will be addressed by Governor Thaawarchand Gehlot. They play compositions of Mysuru Vasudevachar, Muthiah Bhagavatar to Purandara Dasaru and Kanaka Dasaru, along with a wide range from Western music.

The Mysuru Police Band, started in the 1850s by Chamarajendra Wodeyar with European Army music, is probably the only band in the world that has musicians playing both Carnatic and Western instruments in large numbers. It was during the reign of Nalwadi Krishnaraja Wodeyar that Carnatic music was included. CONTINUED ON: P5

27 types of instruments

There are 27 different types of Carnatic instruments and around 30 Western instruments playing at the same time, which makes it unique. These include clarinets, piccolos, bassoons, saxophone, ultra saxophones and french horns.

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ALMANAC TODAY
Monday: 14/02/2022 • Year: Plava • Ayana: Uttharayana • Ritu: Sishira • Masa: Magha • Paksha: Shukla • Tithi: Thrayodasi 7.41 pm • Nakshatra: Punarvasu 11.25 am • Moon in Kataka Rashi • Rahukaala: 07:30 am to 09:00 am • Gulikakala: 01:30 pm to 03:00 pm • Yamaganda: 10:30 am to 12:00 pm

WEATHER
MIN 17°C | MAX 30°C
FORECAST: Clearing skies

Sunrise 6.42 am
Sunset 6.25 pm
Moonrise 4.30 pm
Moonset 4.55 am

MEASURES IN PLACE

Classes 9, 10 to reopen today

Commissioner for Public Instruction says no reason to be worried, hijab row limited to PU, degree colleges

DONNA EVA @Bengaluru

WITH schools scheduled to reopen as planned on Monday across the state, measures have been taken to make sure that peace and decorum prevails.

Commissioner for Public Instruction Dr R Vishal told *The New Indian Express* that there is no reason to worry as the issue seems to be limited to pre-university colleges. On measures taken, he said that all Deputy Directors of Public Instruction (DDPIs) have been informed about the situation and to work towards maintaining decorum.

"All DDPIs have been strictly instructed by the chief minister and things will continue as dictated by the High Court interim order," he added.

> The issue (in a Bengaluru school) was resolved peacefully and parents were sent home after they were appeased. The owner of the school said that an investigation would be undertaken at the school on Monday
>
> S Rajendra, Bengaluru South DDPI

FOR REPRESENTATIVE PURPOSE

On protests by parents on Saturday, he said, "It was an unfortunate incident, but it is a one-off issue that is very unlikely to occur again as the controversy seems to be limited only to PU colleges and higher."

On Saturday, around a hundred parents protested against the alleged abuse of Muslim students by a teacher at a school in Chandra Layout in Bengaluru.

The incident was the first in Bengaluru since the hijab controversy started. The teacher had allegedly forced students to remove their hijabs and abused the children verbally and in writing. However, the school had said it was a case of misunderstanding.

Bengaluru South DDPI S Rajendra told *The New Indian Express* that the issue was resolved peacefully and parents were sent home after they were appeased. The owner of the school said that an investigation would be undertaken at the school on Monday.

Meanwhile, holidays for PU and degree colleges have been extended, with Chief Minister Basavaraj Bommai saying that a decision to reopen them will be taken after assessing the situation.

Support pours in for Udupi's protesting girls

DONNA EVA @Bengaluru

EXPRESSING solidarity with the girls involved in the hijab controversy, a group of around 30 people took to Bengaluru streets on Sunday, putting up posters and messages as well as heart-shaped balloons to bolster their morale.

Speaking to TNIE, Aishwarya R, one of the activists involved, said, "We had involved numerous people, from LGBT+ activists, women's rights groups, advocates, academics, and citizens around Bengaluru came together. We undertook it as a way to show solidarity because we, as citizens, are concerned about the state of democracy."

The group went to localities like Marathahalli and Malleshwaram to pin posters with messages of solidarity, making use of the theme #HeartsForTheConstitution. Messages included 'My Body, My Choice', 'Girls Just Wanna Have Fundamental Rights', and 'don't ask girls to choose between an education and their faith'.

Aishwarya told *TNIE* that the initiative wasn't a part of any particular organisation but rather a coming together of citizens. "We made a conscious decision to desist from making this part of any organisation. We're coming together as concerned citizens who want to speak out against what is happening, and we don't want the debate to stop only at this," she said.

A poster and balloons put up in support of the protesting girls

Lamenting the lack of action on the hijab controversy in Bengaluru, she said, "While it might be a bold move, the reason why no one has spoken out is fear. With things like the candlelight vigil cancelled, people are afraid to speak out on the issue, but it's important to show that women's rights are human rights, and that democracy is in danger," she said, and added that the exhibit of support for the girls was done especially as the court is expected to deliver its verdict on the issue on Monday.

> We undertook it as a way to show solidarity because we, as citizens, are concerned about the state of democracy
> — Aishwarya R, an activist

Non-teaching staff demand roll back of new system

EXPRESS NEWS SERVICE
@Bengaluru

As the Human Resources Management System (HRMS) is being rolled out in universities in Karnataka, non-teaching staff have expressed their discontent with the move.

HRMS has been implemented as a way to disburse salaries to employees directly to their bank accounts. However, the non-teaching staff objected to the move. In a statement released by the Karnataka State Universities Non-Teaching Employees Confederation, they said, "The step will take away the autonomy of universities and make the universities bend before the state-level bureaucracy for any financial matters. It also encourages corruption in the field of higher education."

The issue was brought up during the fifth conference of the Confederation on February 12. The confederation urged that the system be rolled back. In addition, they also demanded that the new pension scheme be repealed, calling it a "hanging sword" on employees. The conference also highlighted the lack of funding to state universities, hoping for an increase in allocation in the upcoming budget.

K'taka gets 1st NAAC A+ grade institute

EXPRESS NEWS SERVICE
@Bengaluru

THE Dayananda Sagar Academy of Technology and Management (DSATM) became the first institute in the state to be awarded an A+ grade by National Assessment and Accreditation Council (NAAC). Affiliated to Visvesvaraya Technological University (VTU), the institution comes under the umbrella of Dayananda Sagar Institutions.

Rohan Prem Sagar, who is a part of the board of governors at Dayananda Sagar Institutions said, "For students, employers and the community, academic partners, government agencies and other R&D centres a high NAAC ranking indicates the soundness of its governance, academic delivery, among several other critical parameters. DSATM is now ready to enlarge its operations across its functions to give better outcomes to students and faculty."

In its two years of functioning the institution has won multiple awards and grades by national, industry and government bodies, he added.

DAY OF ROSES

A flower vendor sorts various types of roses on the eve of Valentine's Day in Bengaluru on Sunday. The entire wholesale flower market came alive with vendors expecting brisk business as the flower trade too was hit by the pandemic | SHRIRAM BN

GET BACK EJIPURA LAND FROM MAVERICK: LOKAYUKTA TO BBMP

YATHIRAJU @Bengaluru

THE Karnataka Lokayukta has recommended that the state government terminate the contracts between the BBMP and Maverick Holdings and Investments Pvt Ltd (MHIPL) that were signed in 2012 and 2014 and to take back possession of the entire land earmarked for developing quarters for Economically Weaker Sections (EWS) at Ejipura in Koramangala.

The Lokayukta recommended that the state government and BBMP check the validity of the mortgage that was taken after depositing title deeds of the land with Indiabulls Housing Finance Limited (IBHFL).

"If it is not valid in law, take immediate steps to protect the property of BBMP by instituting legal proceedings and consider blacklisting MHIPL for five years," the Lokayukta stated, suggesting that the quarters be constructed either by BBMP or entrust the work to a well-reputed construction agency.

Before demitting office after his term as Lokayukta ended on January 22, 2022, Justice P Vishwanatha Shetty, in his report to the chief secretary observed: "The BBMP has not exercised its power under clause 3(g) and 5(i) of the joint memo to take over the project and complete the same to protect the interest of 1,512 families waiting to have a roof soon. May be, they were apprehensive of MHIPL engaging them in legal proceedings or they did not muster sufficient courage and strength to take action for the default of MHIPL on account of the fact that the Managing Director of MHIPL, Uday Garudachar, has become an MLA of the ruling party."

The report revealed that MHIPL has obtained Rs 210 crore from IBHFL and utilised Rs 24.73 crore for constructing 114 units with basement work, while the remaining amount has been withheld without being used for construction which amounts to criminal breach of trust, cheating and misappropriation.

Recommending steps to get the excess amount, the Lokayukta directed the state to initiate criminal proceedings against the MD and directors of MHIPL for the offences punishable under IPC, if it fails to redeposit the money with outstanding interest payable to IBHFL within three months from the date of demand.

Maverick MD Uday B Garudachar gave an undertaking before the Lokayukta in May 2017 that they are trying to do their best to complete the construction of houses positively in 18 months, subject to a condition that sanctions and approvals, required for construction of EWS quarters, are issued by BBMP and BDA.

Accordingly, the work was required to commence with effect from June 2017, and complete by December 2018, the report states.

Daily Starscope

PETER VIDAL

14th February: Science is getting increasingly strange. Most scientists think that the world is made up of sub-atomic particles. A few argue that it consists of information, as if ideas are the actual building blocks out of which our world is made. Astrologers are then the people who interpret the ideas that can be seen in the movements and patterns of the stars.

ARIES (Mar 21 - Apr. 20)
It's an emotional day and you're set for a busy week with many changes of mood. From today, the urgency to pursue various negotiations, especially those with a personal dimension, will become more obvious. Yet there is no immediate rush to reach a decision.

TAURUS (Apr. 21 - May 21)
At last, you can begin to map out the future. Plans for the next stage of your relentless advance should now be complete. You are being buoyed up by a continuing sense that financial conditions can only improve. On the other hand, further information is required, as you well know.

GEMINI (May 22 - June 21)
That optimistic planet Jupiter is at a crucial point in its twelve-year cycle around your horoscope, during which opportunities have come and gone. The sky is the limit as the culmination of this long-term phase approaches. I'd say it's time to broaden your horizons.

CANCER (June 22 - July 23)
Your passions are due to increase. Far from undermining you, partners' discreet actions will be calculated to further your interests. In any case, it will be a brave person who manages to take you on, and win, as long as Mars and Venus are so closely linked.

LEO (July 24 - Aug. 23)
Partners are playing a complicated game, that's for sure. You're still faced with contradictions, but may be utterly unable to clarify the issues, let alone resolve differences. Fall back on support from social contacts as a means of pursuing your goals.

VIRGO (Aug. 24 - Sept. 23)
You've got three substantial planetary movements over the next week. Venus is soon to join Mercury and Uranus to complete a brilliant and determined trio in critical sectors of your solar chart. There really is nothing that you cannot achieve, if you set your heart on it.

LIBRA (Sept. 24 - Oct. 23)
Yours is not usually known as an adventurous sign, even though individual Librans have often been known to take a tough stance. Now is one of those times when all of you may take several major steps forward. If you have any truly loyal friends, stick close - they're the ones who will carry you to the future.

SCORPIO (Oct. 24 - Nov. 22)
Much has been written about your financial and business affairs over recent months. Everything that takes place now will convince you that good fortune is likely to become permanent rather than, as once you feared, be no more than a temporary blip.

SAGITTARIUS (Nov. 23 - Dec. 22)
However much you pretend otherwise, chance words can go deep. It must now be repeated that if you step aside and allow partners to take centre stage, you may share in their good fortune. Also, decisions involving your personal affairs must be taken in the full light of day.

CAPRICORN (Dec. 23 - Jan. 20)
The planets are indicating the possibility of a dramatic improvement in your health. Yet this will not take place without some initiative on your part, perhaps dietary, perhaps associated with complementary medicine or a new exercise regime.

AQUARIUS (Jan. 21 - Feb. 19)
An extraordinary line-up of pugnacious planets is exerting an influence over creative sectors of your chart, producing exactly the degree of support that you need at this time. Among the beneficiaries are people to whom you are romantically linked.

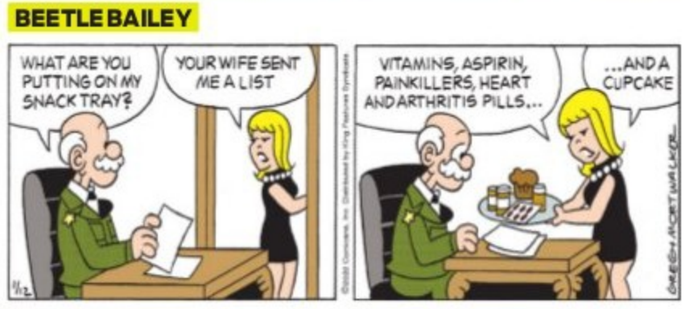
PISCES (Feb. 20 - Mar 20)
At last you can feel that property and domestic affairs are going your way. Certainly, you can afford to be optimistic about family relationships and everything which is emotionally fundamental to your existence. You'll also stop imagining that a partner is blocking your path.

THE PHANTOM

MY CHRONICLE.... I'M TIRED....
IN THE MORNING I'LL WRITE MORE ON THE RECORD OF YOUR FALL, PHANTOM....
MOZZ.... WHERE DOES SHE GO?
TELL ME NOW.
DE PAUL + HANK

HI AND LOIS

BEETLE BAILEY


WHAT ARE YOU PUTTING ON MY SNACK TRAY?
YOUR WIFE SENT ME A LIST
VITAMINS, ASPIRIN, PAINKILLERS, HEART AND ARTHRITIS PILLS...
...AND A CUPCAKE

BLONDIE

BOSS, WHY ISN'T MY NAME ON THE PROMOTIONS LIST?
YOU'RE ALREADY THE OFFICE MANAGER, BUMSTEAD
THERE'S NOTHING LEFT FOR YOU TO BE PROMOTED TO
HOW WAS WORK TODAY, DEAR?
APPARENTLY IT'S ALL DOWNHILL FROM HERE

LOCKHORNS

"I'M AFRAID I CAN'T HELP YOU, SIR... THIS COMPUTER WAS OBSOLETE BEFORE I WAS BORN."

DENNIS THE MENACE

"ANY QUESTIONS?" "ARE WE DONE YET?"

	6			8		3		
		7				6	1	
4							8	9
1						9		5
			7	6	9			
6		3						7
3	5							1
	4	1				2		
		2		3			9	

SU DO KU

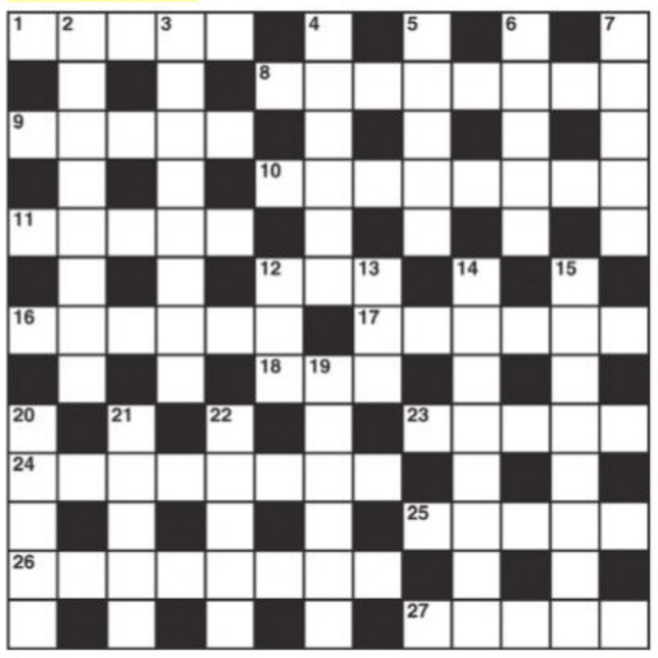
Hard: Test your number crunching skill with our unique puzzle

Fill in the grid with digits in such a manner that every row, every column and every 3X3 box accommodates the digits 1 to 9, without repeating any.

Solutions to Saturday's puzzle

1	6	4	9	2	7	5	8	3
5	7	2	3	8	1	4	9	6
9	8	3	5	6	4	7	1	2
7	9	8	4	3	5	6	2	1
2	1	5	8	9	6	3	7	4
3	4	6	7	1	2	9	5	8
4	2	9	1	7	3	8	6	5
6	3	7	2	5	8	1	4	9
8	5	1	6	4	9	2	3	7

CROSS WORD



ACROSS

1 A drink to mature in two ways (5)
8 Sighs sadly about riotous din in festivities (8)
9 Secure link (3-2)
10 Claim money round about the end of August (8)
11 No right to praise new colour (5)
12 She's a bit of a madam (3)
16 Gems and pelts (6)
17 Scotsman saw unusual parrots (6)
18 Where the farmer will go to sow? (3)
23 Works in which the unwary get caught (5)
24 Give up control and hang around (4,4)
25 A negative in some trouble (5)
26 They establish what a ship does when it sinks (8)
27 Rough number (5)

DOWN

2 Drink of tea I sent out for (8)
3 Ensure it will make you rapacious (8)
4 Her sad confusion isn't hers alone (6)
5 Joins in a rising smell (5)
6 Foreigners lack initial rights (5)
7 Drained of blood - like poultry (5)
12 Initially any short-witted simpleton (3)
13 Girl seen around May (3)
14 Arrange chores on a ship (8)
15 Partition between pigs and birds (8)
19 Those people hold gold as a speculation (6)
20 Expedient wear (5)
21 Finish with one's tail in the air (3,2)
22 They have their worth for a poet (5)

SATURDAY'S SOLUTIONS

Across: 1 Bill poster, 6 Beat, 10 Cecil, 11 Restarted, 12 Tapering, 13 Diary, 15 Reissue, 17 Shouted, 19 Speed up, 21 Chemist, 22 Power, 24 Eligible, 27 Animation, 28 Idaho, 29 Even, 30 Grenadiers.

Down: 1 Back, 2 Lucrative, 3 Pulse, 4 Sardine, 5 Ensigns, 7 Extra, 8 Today's date, 9 Hard core, 14 Brass plate, 16 Sidereal, 18 Trial, game, 20 Premier, 21 Chignon, 23 Whine, 25 Iliad, 26 Lots.

JUMBLE By David L. Hoyt and Jeff Knurek

Unscramble these Jumbles, one letter to each square, to form four ordinary words.

IGCNI

VIAEW

GPTILE

NTOONI

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Now arrange the circled letters to form the surprise answer, as suggested by the above cartoon

"◯◯◯-◯◯◯◯-◯◯◯◯◯◯"

ANSWERS TOMORROW

SATURDAY'S **Jumbles:**
CONGA MUNCH OUTAGE ELDEST
ANSWER: The individual digits that make up the number 11 are — ONE AND THE SAME

THE NEW INDIAN EXPRESS

BENGALURU

03 BENGALURU | MONDAY 14.02.2022 | newindianexpress.com

The healthcare system in Dharwad district is expected to get a major push with health department authorities putting in their efforts to convert four existing Primary Health Centers (PHCs) into model ones. Each taluk will be able to provide health services in a couple of years.

TRACKING COVID-19

DURATION OF PANDEMIC
1 YEAR, 341 DAYS

CASES REPORTED
Today: **2,372** | Yesterday: **3,202**

TALLY
Today: **39,26,669**
Yesterday: **39,24,297**

DEATHS	DISCHARGES
Today: **27**	Today: **5,395**
Yesterday: **38**	Yesterday: **8,988**

ACTIVE CASES
Today: **35,697**
Yesterday: **38,747**

POSITIVITY RATE	MORTALITY RATE
Today: **6.18%**	Today: **1.00%**
Yesterday: **6.19%**	Yesterday: **1.00%**

RECOVERY RATE
Today: **98.08%**
Yesterday: **98.00%**

DISTRICT-WISE COVID CASES
LAST 24 HOURS

Bengaluru Urban	**1,059**
Bengaluru Rural	**13**
Bagalkot	15
Ballari	112
Belagavi	96
Bidar	20
Chamarajanagar	27
Chikkaballapur	27
Chikkamagaluru	35
Chitradurga	53
Dakshina Kannada	92
Davanagere	28
Dharwad	72
Gadag	30
Hassan	59
Haveri	07
Kalaburagi	34
Kodagu	69
Kolar	18
Koppal	06
Mandya	51
Mysuru	148
Raichur	17
Ramanagara	08
Shivamogga	72
Tumakuru	74
Udupi	54
Uttara Kannada	29
Vijayapura	41
Yadgir	06

Pandemic waning in K'taka, recovery rate at 98%

Positivity rate in a declining trend, active cases drop by 7.87 pc; Number of fresh cases see a fall across State

EXPRESS NEWS SERVICE
@ Bengaluru

Karnataka's overall positivity rate plunged to 6.18 per cent on Sunday after showing declining trends when on February 9, for the first time after January 7, the rate fell to 6.20 per cent.

The day positivity rate (number of positive cases per 100 tests in a day) has fallen to 2.31 from a high of 32 per cent, about a month ago when the Omicron variant was raging.

The state's recovery rate, which was 90.04 per cent on January 27, has shot up to 98.08 per cent, recording almost a one percent jump on consecutive days from January 27 to 29, and then again from February 1 to 3.

Compounding the improvement is the number of active cases that witnessed the highest drop from 3,28,711 on January 27 to 35,697 on Sunday, witnessing a double-figure percentage drop on the trot with the highest 19.07 per cent being recorded in this period on February 1. The active cases dropped from 38,747 on Saturday to 35,697, recording a drop of 7.87 per cent, a day

FILE PICTURE

after witnessing a drop of 13.06 per cent.

B'luru logs 1,059 new cases

Bengaluru reported just 1,059 fresh cases. On January 3, the state capital reported 1,041 cases, marking a steep ascent to the third wave peak. The city saw the highest number of daily new cases added on January 20 when 30,540 cases were reported.

The city's active cases too have dropped from 1,05,125 on February 1 to 14,230 cases, with February 4 seeing a massive drop of 27.79 per cent from 71,525 cases the previous day to 51,645.

The recovery rate has increased from 92.95 per cent on February 1 to 98.24 per cent on Sunday.

1,115 Omicron cases detected

A total of 5,996 samples were genome-sequenced since it began in mid-December 2021. The labs have found 1,115 cases to be of Omicron variant and its sub-lineages (BA.1.529, 807; BA.1, 89; and BA.2, 219); 4,431 of Delta variant and its sub-lineages; 156 of Alpha variant; eight of Beta variant; and 286 of other variants including the ETA/Kappa/Pango. However, the department officials said genome sequencing only determines the trend as samples are taken from a

Zuari Cement
HEIDELBERGCEMENT Group
ENGINEERED FOR DURABILITY
BENGALURU
suggested retail price (per 50 kg bag)
Primo Greencem
₹460*/-
Zuari cement
₹450*/-
T&C, Handling & Local Freight extra.

Pillion rider killed in road mishap

EXPRESS NEWS SERVICE
@ Bengaluru

A 21-year-old pillion rider died after the speeding bike crashed into a car in Kengeri on Sunday. The biker, Sunil, escaped with minor injuries.

The deceased has been identified as Harshit, who hails from Mandya and was working as a mason in the city.

A senior police officer said that the incident occurred early in the morning. The pair were passing on NICE road and Harshit was carrying iron rods on the bike.

Sunil tried to overtake a car, the iron rods placed horizontally on the bike, brushed against the vehicle. Sunil lost balance due to the collision.

The duo fell down and Harshit, who was not wearing a helmet, suffered severe head injuries and died on the spot.

A case of negligence driving has been registered against Sunil for rash driving and further investigations about the incident are on.

Advocate arrested over threat to 'hang' police chief

EXPRESS NEWS SERVICE
@ Bengaluru

ADVOCATE Jagadish Mahadev was arrested on Sunday for allegedly threatening to hang state police chief, DG&IGP Praveen Sood, and Bengaluru Police commissioner Kamal Pant, if his son died in the Victoria Hospital, where he is said to be undergoing treatment after being allegedly assaulted.

The police and a group of advocates have pointed out that the attack on Mahadev's 19-year-old son, Aryan, by a gang of lawyers on Friday at City Civil Court premises, was "cooked up".

On Sunday, the Halasur Gate police have also booked his two colleagues, his son and 40 others as co-accused in connection with the case.

Mahadev was arrested following a complaint by advocate, Narayanaswamy G, and police have filed an FIR charging him under sections of the IPC for creating disharmony, feeling of hatred, unlawful assembly, rioting, wrongful restraint, assault and criminal intimidation.

On Friday, Mahadev arrived at the court complex with 40 of his colleagues to submit documents in a case related to alleged land grabbing by IPS officer, Ravi D Channanavar, the complaint read. The group allegedly attacked Narayanaswamy at the venue after which he received threat calls from Mahadev's followers.

A little later, Mahadev reportedly approached the Halasur Gate police alleging that his son was attacked and claimed his condition was serious at Victoria Hospital. But the police were unable to get any evidence in that regard.

Mahadev also uploaded a series of videos on his social media accounts, which included threats to Sood and Pant.

The police reportedly did not file a case over the alleged attack on Aryan due to lack of evidence. The Advocates' Association president, Vivek Reddy, on Saturday had approached Pant seeking strict action against Mahadev, who has been remanded to judicial custody.

Four drug peddlers held, 13.4 kg marijuana found

EXPRESS NEWS SERVICE
@ Bengaluru

THE North Division police on Saturday conducted a special drive against narcotics and arrested four men including a security guard in two separate cases. A total of 13.4 kgs of marijuana has been seized from them.

A senior police officer said that based on a tip off, the Nandini Layout police raided a house at Lakshmidevi Nagar and caught three persons red handed while they were waiting to deliver drugs for their customers.

The prime accused hails from Odisha and works as a security guard in an apartment. He would procure the drugs from his contacts with drug dealers in his home town. He would neatly conceal the drugs in a packet, cover it with cloths and carry it in a backpack on a train from his native. He would then identify newly constructed and unused drains across the city and hide the drugs by packing in several layers of plastic sheets. The police recovered 10 kgs of marijuana which he had concealed at various places.

Similarly, the Yeshawanthpura police arrested a peddler and recovered 3.4 kgs of marijuana.

The accused was an habitual offender and was caught red handed. The four accused have been booked under the NDPS act.

Well Running Sugar Factory And Ethanol Plant For Sale

A Well running Sugar factory and ethanol plant with fully atomization located in Karnataka state for sale.

1	Operational Status	Running Factory.
2	All Permissions and license	State and Central Government.
3	Plant Capacity	4500TCD.Expandable to 800TCD.
4	Power Plant	20 MW.
5	Ethanol plant capacity	75 KLPD with zero liquid discharge.
6	Total Land	166 Acre.
7	Location Benefit	All raw material (sugar cane) available within 35 KM radius.
8	Irrigation Facilities Nearby	One perennial river nearby and canal of one big dam nearby.

Those interested should mail their contact details on this
Mail id: salesugar1@gmail.com

IN THE DEBTS RECOVERY TRIBUNAL-I FOR KARNATAKA
FIRST FLOOR JEEVAN MANGAL BUILDING, 4, RESIDENCY ROAD, BENGALURU- 560025
O.A. NO.627/2019
BETWEEN
State Bank of India ...APPLICANT
AND:
Mrs. B.N. Rekha ...DEFENDANT
Summons issued under Rule 23(viii) of the Debt Recovery Tribunal (Procedure) Rules, 1993 to the defendants

Whereas, the Applicant has instituted an application U/S 19 of the Recovery of Debts Due to Bank and Financial Institutions Act, 1993, against you for the recovery of sum **Rs.12,26,347/- (Rupees Twelve Lakhs Twenty Six Thousand Three Hundred and Forty Seven Only)** as on **23/04/2019** together with current and future interest and other reliefs.
You are hereby required to show cause within 30 days from the date of publication of this summons or on **02/06/2022 at 10:30 A.M** in person or by a Pleader/ Advocate duly instructed as to why the reliefs prayed for should not be granted. Take notice that in case of default the Application will be heard and determined in your absence.
Given under my hand and seal of this Tribunal on this **09th day of February, 2022**

Signatur of the Registrar DRT-I
Authorized to Issue Summons

To
The Defendant :
Mrs.B.N. Rekha, W/o Mr.B.S. Anand, No.74, Opp Hotel Adigas, 80 Feet Road, Chandra Layout, Bangalore -560 040

IN THE DEBTS RECOVERY TRIBUNAL-I FOR KARNATAKA
FIRST FLOOR JEEVAN MANGAL BUILDING, 4, RESIDENCY ROAD, BENGALURU- 560025
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Mrs.B.N. Rekha, W/o Mr.B.S. Anand, No.74, Opp Hotel Adigas, 80 Feet Road, Chandra Layout, Bangalore -560 040

आईआरईएल (इंडिया) लिमिटेड
IREL (India) Limited
(A Govt. of India Undertaking – Department of Atomic Energy)
Manavalakurichi, Tamil Nadu, e-mail : purchase-mk@irel.co.in
An ISO 9001, 14001 & 45001 Company, Phone: 04651-200402
CIN : U15100MH1950GOI008187

MK/P. ADVT/2021-22/12 **TENDER NOTICE** 12-02-2021

IREL, MK invites Request For Proposal for the following items / job descriptions:

Tender No.	Description
GeM/2022/B/1883201	Supply of structural steel
IREL/Kanyakumari/21-22/ET85	Supply, Installation and commissioning of PLC based control system

For further details visit www.mstcecommerce.com/eprochome/irel, https://gem.gov.in, www.irel.co.in and CPP Portal. Corrigendum / Extension, if any, will be hosted in the above websites only.

Sd/-
General Manager & Head, MK

गार्डन रीच शिपबिल्डर्स एण्ड इंजीनियर्स लिमिटेड
Garden Reach Shipbuilders & Engineers Limited
(भारत सरकार का उपक्रम / A Govt. of India Undertaking), रक्षा मंत्रालय / Ministry of Defence
Regd and Corp Office: GRSE BHAVAN, 61, Garden Reach Road, Kolkata - 700 024
Web: www.grse.in, (CIN: L35111WB1934GOI007891)

Tender No. PUR/TGD/OT PRESS /VESSEL TRANSPORTATION/ET-1819, Dated: 11.02.2022

Offers are invited from reputed vendors for execution of the Transportation of Vessel from GRSE LTD Kolkata to Georgetown Guyana through Semi-submersible vessel on door to door delivery basis.
1. For details, please visit GRSE website **www.grse.in** and **www.tenders.gov.in** and **https://eprocuregrse.co.in**
2. Any addendum/corrigendum to this tender enquiry will be published in above websites only.

"In Pursuit of Excellence and Quality in Shipbuilding"
Visit us at: www.grse.in

PUBLIC NOTICE
TO WHOMSOEVER CONCERNED

This is to bring to the notice of the general public and to whomsoever concerned that, my client Mr. Adisheesha H K is a builder/ developer and Proprietor of M/S HPR Constructions doing business at No. 67, Shivashakti Enclave, Krishna Reddy layout Domlur Bangalore 560071 is going to deal/transact with Mr. T B R Borojanna S/o Late T B Rajoo, Smt. Bhargavi Borojanna D/o T B R Borojanna and Smt. Shambavi Borojanna D/o T B R Borojanna being the land owners of odd shaped land measuring about 13,914 square feet along with superstructure measuring about 3,035 square feet carved out of property bearing No.3 (old No.7/A) situated at Spencer Road Frazer Town civil station Bangalore 560005 ward No.78, Pulikeshinagar, old ward no.91, PID No.91-76-3, by entering into a Joint Development Agreement to develop the aforesaid land by constructing residential apartments thereon. Hence, any person/s claiming any right, title or interest over the aforesaid land, may lodge their objection or claims, if any, in writing to the undersigned within 14 Days from thereof. Any objection/claims received thereafter will not be entertained/ binding on my client.
The general public's are hereby cautioned not to enter into any Agreement/ any deeds or arrangements with respect to aforesaid land. No such arrangements/ MOU's/ any deeds shall be valid and they shall not bind my client.

SUNEEL S NARAYAN, Advocate
B-1, Ground Floor,"Shree Balaji Enclane",
No.5, 13th 'A' Cross, 2nd Block,
Jayanagar, Bangalore-560011.
Mob: 94487 37567 Date: 12-02-2022

PUBLIC NOTICE

My clients are intending to purchase the schedule mentioned property from its owner/s **1) Sri. R. BHAGAVANTHARAO,** aged about 60 years, S/o. Sri. Ramarao, **2) Smt. PRASANNA KUMARI.G,** aged about 53 years, W/o. Sri. R. Bhagavantharao, **3) B. JENIFER RAO,** aged about 33. years, D/o. Sri. R. Bhagavantharao, **4) B. JENNET RAO,** aged about 29 years, D/o. Sri. R. Bhagavantharao, All 1 to 4 are r/at.No.01, Bethel Church, Sorahunase Cross, Varthur, Bangalore-560 087. The owners have represented that the schedule property is free from all encumbrances. Be it known, that if any person/s having any objections in respect of the schedule property they shall lodge their claim/objections with documentary proof to the undersigned within **15 (fifteen) days** from the date of publication of this notice. In the absence of receipt of any legally, valid claim/ objections within the aforesaid period, my client will proceed with the purchase of the schedule property.

SCHEDULE PROPERTY

ALL THAT PIECE AND PARCEL of the immovable property bearing Portion of Sy.No.60/3, (converted for residential purpose vide conversion order No.ALN(E.V.H) SR:225/2012-2013 dated 19:10:2012 issued by the Deputy Commissioner, Bangalore, measuring 2025 square feet (out of 15.04 guntas), BBMP Katha Sl.No.6306, Property No.60/3, situated at **Varthur village, Varthur Hobli, Ward No. 149, Bangalore** and bounded on: **EAST BY:** Land belongs to Subramani in same Sy.No.60/3, **WEST BY:** P-Square Apartments constructed in Sy.No.60/3, **NORTH BY:** Road, **SOUTH BY:** Government Oni.

K. Mohan, Advocate,
No. 64, 4th Cross, INDIRANAGAR
2nd STAGE, BANGALORE-560 038
Mobile. No. 9845234925

PUBLIC NOTICE

The general public are hereby informed that, my clients are negotiating the terms of purchase of the schedule property with (1) Sarala Vittal, W/o late T.C.Vittal, aged about 63 years (2) Manasi Gajanan Modak, W/o Pavan Kumar T.V, aged about 31 years, both residing at No.34, Jyestha Mountain Road, Near Madhavan Park, Jayanagar 1st Block, Bangalore – 560 011, title holders of the schedule property.

Person/s objecting for the proposed purchase or having any right, title or interest in the schedule property stated below may lodge their objection in writing with the undersigned along with supporting documentary evidence for such claim within **one week** from this date. Person/s having filed any case/s in respect of the schedule property are also informed to lodge their objections with documentary proof within one week from the date of this publication. Any objections received thereafter will not be binding on my clients and my clients will proceed to purchase the schedule property as if there are no claims/objections.

SCHEDULE

All that piece and parcel of vacant residential site bearing No.74, Old CMC Katha No.237/ 223/ 243, Old BBMP Katha No.244/237/223/245, New BBMP Katha No.246/223/243/237/74/244, PID No.223/243/237/74/244, carved out of converted land bearing old Sy.No.23, situated at Mylasandra Village, Kengeri Hobli, Bangalore South Taluk, comes under the jurisdiction of BBMP Ward No.198, measuring East to West 60 feet and North to South: 40 feet in all measuring 2400 sq.feet, bounded on: *East by : Road, West by : Site No.97, North by: Site No.73, South by: Site No.75.*

D. H. MOKHASHI & ASSOCIATES, Advocate,
No.831, Jaya Shanti Nele, 2nd Floor,
1st E Main Road, Girinagar 2nd Stage,
Bangalore-560 085. Ph : 080-26720175
Mobile : 98454-98591

IN THE COURT OF THE CITY CIVIL JUDGE AND DISTRICT JUDGE AT BANGALORE, CCH-83
C.O.S.No.101/2020

Plaintiff: The State Bank of India,
Vs
Defendants: M/s. Granite Art and others.
Summons to Defendants

To
1. M/s. Granite Art, Partnership Firm, represented by its Partners Mr. Yaseen & Mrs. Abnagee Parween, situated at Sy No.19, Gegihalli Village, Banneraghatta Road, Anekal Taluk, Bangalore Rural District.
2. Mr. Yaseen, Major, Partner of M/s. Granite Art, Residing at No.732, Nisarga Layout, Jigani Hobli, Anekal Taluk, Bangalore -560083.
3. Mrs. Abnagee Parween, Partner of M/s. Granite Art, Residing at No.732, Nisarga Layout, Jigani Hobli, Anekal Taluk, Bangalore -560083.
Please take summons that the plaintiff Bank has filed suit against you the defendants for Recovery of suit claim amount of **Rs.5,14,214/- (Rupees Five Lakh fourteen thousand two hundred and fourteen only)** with interest at 17.65% Per annum compounded quarterly rest from the date of suit till the date of realization of decretal amount such other relief.
You the defendants here by summoned to appear before this Hon'ble court on **09/03/2022 at 11-00 A.M.**in person or through Advocate to submit your written statement and objections if any to the claim of the plaintiff, failing which you will be placed exparte and the suit will be disposed off in your absence. in accordance with law.
Given under my hand and the seal of the Hon'ble court on this **04/02/2022**

By Orders of the Court
Sd/- Sheristedar
City Civil Court, Bengaluru.

Advocate for Plaintiff
Sri. N.G. Ravi Kumar,
Sri Rohith Ravikumar, No.4323, 17th Main, Behind Martin Luther School, Girinagar IV Phase, Bangalore-560050.

PUBLIC NOTICE

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Person/s objecting for the proposed purchase or having any right, title or interest in the schedule property stated below may lodge their objection in writing with the undersigned along with supporting documentary evidence for such claim within **one week** from this date. Person/s having filed any case/s in respect of the schedule property are also informed to lodge their objections with documentary proof within one week from the date of this publication. Any objections received thereafter will not be binding on my clients and my clients will proceed to purchase the schedule property as if there are no claims/objections.

SCHEDULE

All that piece and parcel of vacant residential site bearing No.74, Old CMC Katha No.237/ 223/ 243, Old BBMP Katha No.244/237/223/245, New BBMP Katha No.246/223/243/237/74/244, PID No.223/243/237/74/244, carved out of converted land bearing old Sy.No.23, situated at Mylasandra Village, Kengeri Hobli, Bangalore South Taluk, comes under the jurisdiction of BBMP Ward No.198, measuring East to West 60 feet and North to South: 40 feet in all measuring 2400 sq.feet, bounded on: *East by : Road, West by : Site No.97, North by: Site No.73, South by: Site No.75.*

D. H. MOKHASHI & ASSOCIATES, Advocate,
No.831, Jaya Shanti Nele, 2nd Floor,
1st E Main Road, Girinagar 2nd Stage,
Bangalore-560 085. Ph : 080-26720175
Mobile : 98454-98591

LOST

I, **M. S. Nalini,** No. 44, Om Sai Ram Jayanagar Housing Co-Operative Society, Gubbalala, Subramanyapura Post, Bangalore, have lost the Original Sale Deed document No. MYW-1-02209-2012-13 Dated : 01/03/2013
In this regard I have lodged missing complaint with the Lost Article Report Reference No. 0156205/2022 dated : 10-02-2022
If any-body find the above said document please return to the above mentioned my address or call us : **9986396654**

KRISHNA BHAGYA JALA NIGAM LIMITED
(A Government of Karnataka Under Taking)
Office of the Executive Engineer, KBJNL.NLBC Division, Rodalabanda-584127 Tq.Lingasugur Dist.Raichur, email:kbjnlnlbc4@gmail.com

No: KBJNL/NLBC/PB/2021-22/4755 Date :-7.2.2022

SHORT TERM TENDER NOTIFICATION
(Through e-tendering only)

On behalf of the Managing Director, KBJNL, Bangalore, the Executive Engineer KBJNL, NLBC Division, Rodalabanda invites percentage tenders in two cover system from PWD Class.I Contractor/KBJNL Category-IIIrd & above for Construction of Convention Hall at S.Buddhinni, Kunekelluru and Thuravihala villages (Work Indent No.21789), as detailed in the short term Tender Notification published in e-procurement portal viz http//eproc.karnataka.gov.in. The Intending tenderers may download the tender document through e-procurement portal viz., http//eproc.karnataka.gov.in.from 11.2.2022 to 25.2.2022 at 4.00 PM. Technical bid will be opened on 28.2.2022 @ 11.00 AM and further details can be obtained from this office in any working days during office hours.

Sd/- Executive Engineer
DIP/Raichur/621/MC&A/2021-22 **KBJNL NLBC Division, Rodalbanda**

SBFC

SBFC Finance Private Limited
(erstwhile Small Business Fincredit India Private Limited)
Registered Office:- Unit No. 103, First Floor, C&B Square, Sangam Complex, Village Chakala, Andheri- Kurla Road, Andheri (East), Mumbai-400059.

POSSESSION NOTICE
(As per Rule 8(2) of Security Interest (Enforcement) Rules, 2002)

Whereas the undersigned being the Authorized Officer of **SBFC Finance Private Limited** under the Securitization, Reconstruction of Financial Assets and Enforcement of Security Interest Act, 2002 and in exercise of the powers conferred under section 13 (12) read with Rule 8 of the Security Interest (Enforcement) rules 2002, issued Demand Notices upon the Borrowers/Co-borrowers mentioned below, to repay the amount mentioned in the notice within 60 days from the date of receipt of the said notice.
The borrower/Co-borrowers having failed to repay the amount, notice is hereby given to the Borrower/Co-borrowers and the public in general that the undersigned has taken possession of the property described herein below in exercise of powers conferred on him/ her under Section 13(4) of the said Act read with Rule 8 of the said rules on the below-mentioned dates.
The Borrower/Co-borrowers in particular and the public in general is hereby cautioned not to deal with the property and any dealings with the property will be subject to the charge of **SBFC Finance Private Limited.**

Name and Address of Borrowers & Date of Demand Notice	Description of Property(ies) & Date of Possession	Amount demanded in Possession Notice (Rs.)
1. RAMCHANDRA C, **2. UMADEVI L,** both having address at, 195, 11TH CROSS, 4TH PHASE, PEENYA 1ST STAGE, BANGALORE, SRS SINGNAL, KARNATAKA - 560058. **Demand Notice Date:** 30–Jun- 2021	All The Piece And Parcel Of Immovable Property Bearing New Municipal No 9, Pid No. 1-67-9, New Pid No. 038-0240-1, Old Katha No. 515, Khaneshumari No. 172/C, Situated At Peenya Village, Yeshwanthpura Hobli, Bangalore North Taluk, Bangalore Measuring East To West: 43.6 Ft., And North To South : 14.6, Totally Measuring 630.75 Sq. Ft., Together With Building Standing Thereon And The Total Property Is Bounded As Follows: East By : Road, West By : Property Belongs To Kenchanarasimahaiah, North By : Property Belongs To Narasappa, South By : Property Belongs To Hanumakka. **Date Of Possession: 12-Feb-2021**	**Rs.1605552/-** (Rupees Sixteen Lakh(s) Five Thousand Five Hundred Fifty Two Only) as on 30th June 2021 & **Rs.1546991/-** (Rupees Fifteen Lakh(s) Forty Six Thousand Nine Hundred Ninety One Only) as on 30th June 2021
1. S KUMARAVELU, **2. POOVARASI G,** No. 1 to No.2 having address at, NO/138, R V Layout Mylasandra Rvc Layout Post, Banglore, Karnataka-560060 & 3. M S Catering, Having Address At, 1/2 Near Global Village, Bgs Road Mylasandra Banglore Karnataka- 560054. **Demand Notice Date:** 15–May- 2021	All The Piece And Parcel Of Immovable Property Bearing Site No. 8, In Converted Survey No. 1, Bbmp Katha No. 523, Eastern Portion Of Property No.471/487 A/504/ 504/8, Measuring East To West 25-3 Feet And North To South 24+23.6)/ 2 Feet In Mylasandra Village, Kengeri Hobli, Banglore South Taluk, Banglore, Karnataka-560060 Bounded As East- Site No.7, West- Remaining Portion Of Same Number Property Sold To M. Vadivelan, North- Road And West- Beml Society Property. **Date of Possession:** 12-Feb-2021	**Rs.1497280/-** (Rupees Fourteen Lakh(s) Ninety Seven Thousand Two Hundred Eighty Only) as on 7th May 2021

The Borrower's attention is invited to provisions of sub-section (8) of section 13 of the Act, in respect of time available, to redeem the secured assets.

Place: Bangalore
Dated: 14th February 2022

Sd/-
(Authorized Officer)
SBFC Finance Private Limited.

STATE BANK OF INDIA
STRESSED ASSETS RECOVERY BRANCH(SARB), BENGALURU

Authorised Officer's Details:
Name: **Smt. Jayanthi A.,**
e -mail Id: sbi.05173@sbi.co.in,
Mobile No: 9448993207
Land Line No. (Office): 080-25943663/77/ 78

Address of the Branch:
Building No.11/90, III Floor, Near Old Shivaji Theatre
J C Road, Bengaluru -560 002
Contact: CCO: **Mr. Chandrashekhar S.S.**
Mb : 9480811732, Tel:080-2594-3678/3663
e-mail Id: sbi.05173@sbi.co.in.

Appendix – IV-A
[See Proviso to rule 8(6)]
Sale notice for sale of immovable property

E-auction SALE NOTICE FOR SALE OF IMMOVABLE ASSET UNDER THE SECURITISATION AND RECONSRUCTION OF FINANCIAL ASSET AND ENFORCEMENT OF SECURITY INTEREST ACT, 2002 READ WITH PROVISO Rule 8 (6) of the security Interest (Enforcement) Rules, 2002

Notice is hereby given to the public in general and in particular to the Borrower, that the below described immovable property mortgaged/charged to the Secured creditor, physical possession of which has been taken by the Authorized Officer of State Bank of India, Secured Creditor, will be sold on **"As is where is", "As is what is" and "Whatever there is"** basis on **04.03.2022** for recovery of **Rs.36,10,033/-** (Rupees Thirty Six Lakhs Ten Thousand Thirty Three only) as on 08.02.2022 and further interest at contractual rate from 09.02.2022 with incidental expenses charges, costs etc., due to State Bank of India, Secured creditor from **Smt. Rayeesa Banu** D/o.Rizwan Pasha (Borrower).
The reserve price, earnest money deposit bid increment amount and last date for receipt of EMD will be as under:-

Property No.	Reserve Price (below which the property will not be sold)	Earnest Money Deposit	Bid increment amount	Last date for receipt of EMD
1.	Rs.23,00,000/-	Rs.2,30,000/-	Rs.50,000/-	03.03.2022

DESCRIPTION OF PROPERTY

Tender No: SBI/SARB/CLN/697
Property No. 1 – (Title deed holder : Smt.Rayeesa Banu)
All that piece and parcel of Flat bearing No.F44, First Floor, D-Block, consisting of Two Bed Room, apartment known as "Pyramid Bilberry" measuring 537 sq.feet carpet area, 585 sq.feet built up area and 702 sq.feet super built area inclusive of proportionate share in common areas passages, lobbies, lifts, staircases and other areas of common use with vitrified flooring and one covered car parking in the stilt floor, with 307 square feet of undivided right, title interest and ownership in the immovable property, the apartment constructed in the immovable property bearing Sy.No.98/1, situated at Chokkanahalli Village, Yelahanka Hobli, Bengaluru North Taluk, measuring 28 ½ guntas (converted for non agricultural residential purpose vide reference No. ALN(NAY) SR 212/2008-09 dated 31.03.2009) and bounded on East by: Land Belongs to Sri. Narasa Reddy and Sri.Ramalinga Reddy & Road, West by: Land belongs to Sri.C N Ashwath Reddy & Road, North by: Land belongs to Sri.Prasad Reddy and South by: Land belongs to Sri.C.N.Shivarama Reddy.

For detailed terms and conditions of the sale, please refer to the link provided in State Bank of India www.sbi.co.in and MSTCE website www.mstcecommerce.com/auctionhome/ibapi/ index.jsp.

Date: 09.02.2022 Sd/-Authorised Officer
Place: Bengaluru State Bank of India,SARB,Bengaluru

Your Guide to Spicy Living

INDULGE
Every Friday with
THE NEW INDIAN EXPRESS

Activists of Karnataka Rajya Makkala Rakshana Nirdeshanalaya Khayametara Naukarara Sangha (Employees Union of Karnataka State Child Protection Directorate Working on Outsourcing Basis) will launch an agitation in Bengaluru on February 21 and 22, demanding that the government fulfil their demands, including job security and crediting honorarium directly into employees' bank accounts, among others

STRAWS IN THE WIND

Listen carefully! It's CM Ibrahim

Questions on senior politician CM Ibrahim's plans to exit the Congress come up regularly at press meets of Congress and JDS leaders these days. Recently, former PM HD Deve Gowda and Deputy CLP leader UT Khader appeared to mishear questions on CM Ibrahim at their press meets. Gowda started commenting on the chief minister of the state and did not stop when the reporter tried to intervene. The reporter didn't dare risk asking the question again! Khader, addressing his first press meet after his elevation as Deputy CLP leader, said he has another 25 years to go before he can think of becoming CM. Obviously, he had missed the word 'Ibrahim'. Another journalist popped up to say the question was about CM Ibrahim and not him becoming CM, leaving Khader red-faced.

Kumaraswamy ko gussa kyon aata hai?!

Former CM HD Kumaraswamy never lets his party supporters down, especially on home turf Ramanagara, even if they are arrested by police. On Sunday, he called up SP K Santhosh Babu and launched a fusillade after the arrest of a farmer and JDS supporter, for keeping 20 bottles of liquor at home. What enraged him was police allegedly going soft on Congress supporters who hoard their bottles of happy. "Farmers who toil hard in the fields keep it for relaxation during evenings. You people let a Congress supporter go scot-free despite hoarding 500 bottles of liquor," he charged Babu. The SP tried his best to make Kumaraswamy understand, but he asked the officer not to meddle in the affairs of his constituency. "I know your background as Chikkamagaluru SP and I may have to take up some issues in Vidhana Soudha. Mind it, I may also have to talk like Kanakapura leaders," warned Kumaraswamy. Without taking names, of course.

Seriously, no one's serious about meetings

A Cabinet Sub-Committee comprising ministers from the seven districts of Kalyana Karnataka was constituted to monitor developmental activities in the region that got special status. Ironically, not even ministers who are members of the committee seem to take its meetings seriously enough to attend them. Ballari district in-charge minister B Sriramulu and chairman of the sub-committee, called a meeting for the first time after nine years in Kalaburagi. However, except for Sriramulu and Kalaburagi in-charge minister Murugesh Nirani, no other members were present. Due to a lack of quorum, the committee couldn't take any decisions. So that takes the political lot back to square one, where they can crib about regional negligence.

What's in a name? Infamy, at times

For some, a name can bring fortune, while for a few, it can erode the fame earned over years. Congress leader and former Mysuru Mayor Ayub Khan landed in a soup for a remark he never made. A social worker by the same name and similar sounding party -- Ayub Khan of New Indian Congress Party from Mysuru -- made a derogatory remark against Gomateshwara in Shravanabelagola, which came under fire from Jain community members and others. The remarks, though, were attributed to the more famous Ayub Khan of the Congress, on social media. Though he clarified that he was not the one who had made such a comment, the post had by then gone viral on WhatsApp groups and other platforms, doing enough damage to his reputation.

Oppn to corner govt over handling of hijab row

Ruling BJP prepared to handle opposition attack, government keen to get Anti-Conversion Bill passed in Council

EXPRESS NEWS SERVICE
@ Bengaluru

THE hijab row that took a violent turn forcing the closure of educational institutions will be among issues that the opposition Congress is likely to take up to corner the state government during the 10-day session of the state legislature starting from Monday.

The session will start with Governor Thaawarchand Gehlot's address to the joint sitting of the Legislative Assembly and Council on Monday. Apart from the hijab row, the opposition is likely to take up Rural Development and Panchayat Raj Minister KS Eshwarappa's controversial comments on hoisting a saffron flag in New Delhi, incidents of moral policing, delay in taking up Mekedatu project, Centre's recent announcement on interlinking of rivers and farmers' issues.

The Congress Legislature Party (CLP) meeting scheduled to be held on Monday evening will discuss the party's strategy to take on the government. On its part, the ruling BJP is prepared to handle the opposition

attack, while the government is keen to get the Anti-Conversion Bill passed in the Council. The bill was passed in the Assembly in December during the session in Belagavi and was tabled in the Council. Now, with its increased strength in the Upper House, the BJP is confident of getting it passed.

Opposition Leader in the Council BK Hariprasad told The New Indian Express that the government failed to handle the hijab row, though the issue had come to its notice in November last year.

Accusing Home Minister Araga Jnanendra of failing to nip the controversy at the beginning, he said incidents of moral policing are on the rise in several parts of the state. The Governor should act against the RDPR minister for speaking of replacing the national flag with a saffron flag, he said.

State Congress working president and MLA Eshwara Khandre said the party will question the government over its failure to create employment opportunities, development of the Kalyana-Karnataka region, irrigation and farmers' issues, he added.

The government is likely to oppose a discussion on hijab row in the House, pointing out that the issue is before the high court. The Congress, however, would want to put the government on the mat over its handling of the controversy and the law or order situation, without getting into the issue of hijab row being heard by the court, sources said.

The government is prepared to respond to the opposition in the Assembly and Council. "Let them take up any issue, we are prepared to respond," BJP state General Secretary and MLC N Ravi Kumar said on Sunday.

POLICE TO ACT STRICT AGAINST MISCREANTS: CM

HUBBALLI: Expressing confidence that high school classes, which are reopening from Monday, will be held peacefully, CM Basavaraj Bommai on Sunday said that officials are keeping an eye on those who are creating trouble in the name of hijab issue and legal action would be taken against perpetrators. Speaking to the media at his residence in Hubballi on Sunday, Bommai said that the police are monitoring social media sites as people are spreading false and incendiary information to create trouble. The priority of the government now is to create a conducive atmosphere for students to attend classes, he added.

'Farmers will be pushed to streets'

CONTINUED FROM PAGE 1

FARMER Kodihalli Chandrashekar said the government should have shown its seriousness by holding official meetings.

This shows the anti-farmer stand of the state government, he commented. The laws planned by the government would push farmers and their families onto the streets and take away their lands.

Doing away with APMC centres would affect farmers as they will not have proper markets to sell their produce, he said. Also, farmers who were affected by last year's floods have not been compensated, while many others have not got Bagair Hukum Saguvali papers, which allows them to cultivate lands, they added.

As the government has allowed large-scale mining in the Malnad region, elephants are moving to farmlands increasing human-animal conflicts, he said.

On the Godavari-Cauvery-Pennar river linking project, he added that Karnataka would stand to lose, while other states would gain.

Mysuru city police take out a route march through the sensitive areas of the city on Sunday | UDAYSHANKARS

Gowda blames national parties for hijab row

HASSAN: Expressing unhappiness over the hijab row, former Prime Minister and JDS supremo HD Deve Gowda on Sunday said that the issue could have been resolved through dialogue by leaders of the national parties, instead of them making futile attempts to take political mileage from it. Addressing reporters here after attending a JDS workers' meeting, he rued that unfortunately, the matter turned into a national issue due to inelegance by leaders of the State Government and also the Opposition. **ENS**

FINDING SOLUTION

Wakf Board chief meets pontiff of Siddaganga Mutt

EXPRESS NEWS SERVICE
@ Tumakuru

IN a significant development to contain the hijab controversy, Karnataka Wakf Board Chairman Maulana Shafi Saadi met Siddaganga Mutt pontiff Sri Siddalinga Swamiji here on Sunday and the two discussed ways to sort out the issue harmoniously and to resurrect the image of the state as a land of peace.

"The issue has been blown out of proportion. The government is under pressure, while Muslims are panic stricken. Many people have called me from across the state up expressing their anxiety," Shafi told reporters.

The issue should be put to an end by religious heads soon after the Karnataka High Court passes the verdict, he added.

Shafi, who is also the general secretary of Karnataka Muslim Jamaat, said, "There is no tug-of-war between religions and the Constitution has given religious freedom to all."

He asserted that miscreants from both religions are behind escalating the issue.

"We have to unite and nail the vested interests to keep the state peaceful, befitting the ideals of Basavanna and Kuvempu, who had shaped Karnataka as a garden of all religions," he said.

Siddalinga Swamiji told the media that leaders from all fronts should work towards putting an end to the hijab-saffron shawl controversy by following the high court verdict. Students should focus on their academics and help maintain communal harmony in the state, he said.

> *The issue has been blown out of proportion. The government is under pressure, while Muslims are panic stricken.*
> Maulana Shafi Saadi, Chairman, Karnataka Wakf Board

'CM must talk to religious heads, parties'

EXPRESS NEWS SERVICE
@ Mysuru

DEPUTY Opposition leader **U T Khader** has urged the government to allow the existing practice of wearing hijab to continue, until the High Court pronounces its judgement. He felt that all the issues cannot be resolved by the courts, and wanted the government to have a meeting with religious leaders and political parties for out of court settlement.

Speaking to mediapersons here on Sunday, Khader said the government should take the lead in resolving issues.

Clarifying that there were no such problems when the Congress was in power, since the party gave enough funds for the construction of schools, he accused the current government of not building even a single school, or giving laptops or scholarships, which has created trouble in education institutions. He alleged that the Congress is being targeted for political gain.

Intellectuals call for repeal of anti-conversion laws

ENS @ Bengaluru

SEVERAL prominent citizens and intellectuals have, through a petition, demanded the repeal of all anti-conversion laws in India, in the context of the scheduled tabling of the Karnataka Right to Freedom of Religion Bill, 2021, in the Upper House on February 14. The petition initiated by the National Solidarity Forum (NSF), a network of civil rights groups and individuals, has called for joining hands to defend the values enshrined in the Constitution and protection of human rights of the minorities and other marginalised sections in India.

While articulating that a new anti-conversion law is not necessary since the Constitution has enough provisions for the same, the signatories to the petition also stated that "wherever the anti-conversion law, ironically officially called Freedom of Religion Act, was passed, it became a justification for the persecution of the minorities and other marginalised identities", said Prof Ram Punyani, convenor, NSF.

Margaret Alva, former Governor of Goa, Gujarat and Uttarakhand, in support of the petition has appealed to support the NSF and dissuade the government from passing the Bill. The initial signatories for the petition to the President include former chief of Naval Staff Admiral L Ramdas, dancer Mallika Sarabhai, activist Medha Patkar, and former Union minister Mani Shankar Aiyar, among others.

'BJP purposely delaying polls to ZP/TPs'

EXPRESS NEWS SERVICE
@ Shivamogga

KPCC working president Satish Jarkiholi alleged that the BJP is purposely delaying conducting the zilla panchayat/taluk panchayat polls, and has instead set up a committee.

Alleging that the BJP is not interested in conducting ZP/TP elections, Satish told reporters here on Sunday that though there was an opportunity to conduct the polls, they (BJP) unnecessarily appointed a committee. The panel was formed to delay the polls, which the ruling party is not interested in holding, he added.

When asked about the hijab and saffron shawl row, Satish said that the issue is in court, which will take a decision soon. Protests took place in some regions and not in all parts of the state. However, currently there is peace in the state, he reflected. While speaking about the Goa elections, Satish said that there is a wave in favor of Congress in Goa, and the party has won 17 seats in Goa during the last elections.

'Present socio-economic survey before SC'

ENS @ Bengaluru

LEADER of Opposition **Siddaramaiah** on Sunday urged the State Government to make use of the social, educational and economic survey conducted by the State Backward Classes Commission to conduct Zilla Panchayat and Taluk Panchayat elections by providing reservation to OBCs.

After the recent judgement of the Supreme Court, reservation cannot be provided to OBC candidates in the ZP, TP or other local body elections, unless the government sets up a commission to study the backwardness of the OBCs. "It is possible to resolve this issue with the social, educational and economic survey conducted by State Backward Classes Commission. The Supreme Court will accept the extensive door-to-door survey conducted in the state, " he said. The survey was conducted when Siddraamaiah was the CM, and the State Government is yet to accept it. He said though political representation was not part of the mandate of the commission when it conducted the survey, the details of political representation of people of all castes were collected; the Supreme Court may consider the survey if the government highlights this point. "The government should immediately accept the survey report and present it before the court without wasting any time," he said.

IT'LL BE OVERALL GROWTH BUDGET: CM

HUBBALLI: CM Basavaraj Bommai, who is conducting a series of meetings of various departments ahead of the state budget 2022-23, said it will be an overall growth-oriented budget. Speaking to media on Sunday, Bommai said, "The focus of the budget will be public welfare with financial discipline. We want to give a boost to the economy, and priority would be the welfare of the poor." **ENS**

PANCHAMASALI COMMUNITY GETS NEW PEETA

EXPRESS NEWS SERVICE
@ Bagalkot

BABLESHWAR Brihanmutt seer **Dr Mahadeva Shivacharya Swamiji** was coronated as the head of the new peeta of the Veerashaiva-Panchamasali community at Alagur village, near Jamkhandi, on Sunday.

The coronation ritual, which was attended by the seers of various prominent mutts, was performed at an auspicious time, thus establishing the third peeta of the Panchamasali community. The other two peetas are the Harihara peeta, headed by Dr Vachananda Swamiji; and Kudalasangama peeta, headed by Basava Jaya Mruthyunjaya Swamiji. All rituals were performed as per Veerashaiva-Lingayat tradition, under the guidance of pontiff Vachananda Swamiji and Managuli Hiremutt seer Shri Sanganabasava Swamiji.

After taking over as pontiff of the third peeta, Dr Mahadeva Shivacharya Swamiji offered prayers to River Krishna at Chikkapadasalagi barrage near Jamkhandi. "I will not just work for the development of the Panchamasali community, but also for the growth of all sub-sects within the community," he added. When asked if he would support the demand for 2A and OBC status for the Panchamasali community, an agitation for which was launched by the pontiff of Kudalasangama peeta, he said, "I will discuss it with the seers of our community before taking a call. However, I will support all the movements that benefit the community."

Speaking on the occasion, Minister for Large and Medium Industries Murugesh Nirani said, "The new peeta is neither in favour of, nor against anybody. I am delighted to be a part of this coronation ceremony. I will sincerely work for the overall development of this region."

BJP vice-president B Y Vijayendra, who was one of the chief guests, said, "Several months ago, a few people made an attempt to portray my father Yediyurappa and me as being against the Panchamasali community. In fact, Yediyurappa fulfilled the long-pending demand of the same community by including them under the 3-B category when he was the CM in 2011."

Interestingly, some top leaders from the community, including minister C C Patil, MLAs Basanagouda Patil Yatnal, and Aravind Bellad were absent. Even Kudalasangama peeta pontiff Basava Jaya Mruthyunjaya Swamiji distanced himself from the ceremony.

Govt recharging tanks to solve drinking water problem in rural areas

BANSY KALAPPA @ Bengaluru

KARNATAKA is one of the most arid states in the country and drought-like conditions in many parts are stretching the resources of the government and its administrative machinery. Nearly 88 per cent of the state does not have required access to drinking water, while the Central Research Institute for Dryland Agriculture (CRIDA) has declared 16 districts as perennially drought prone. With summer just weeks away, water resources authorities are putting together a strategy to ensure that everyone across the state gets a dependable supply of water.

Elaborating on the strategy, Water Resources Minister **Govind Karjol** said, "The state government has taken up projects to alleviate drinking water problems in rural areas by rejuvenating tanks. We started these projects in 2008 when I was the Minor Irrigation Minister. Of the 157 such schemes planned, 62 have been completed. The aim is to recharge 4,600 tanks across the state at a proposed cost of Rs 18,400 crore. We have already recharged and filled up 1,083 tanks by spending around Rs 8,900 crore over the last 30 months. With these projects, we plan to solve around 80 per cent of drinking water problems in rural areas and also recharge groundwater aquifers."

Initially, the Water Resources Department thought of supplying water to villages from rivers. But officials realised that such projects have not solved the problem in most rural parts as people are dependent on tanks. The department reworked the strategy to recharge the water bodies, officials said.

"In areas where rivers are close, we are recharging the tanks using these waters. In other places, we fill the water bodies using tankers or by pumping groundwater. The state has nearly 37,000 tanks," they said.

The Sri Lankan Navy has arrested 12 more Rameswaram natives, who were fishing in two trawlers near Katchatheevu late Saturday night, on charges of crossing the International Maritime Boundary Line. The fishers were later remanded in custody till January 25 by the Kilinochchi Court

T'GANA CM FOR CHANGE OF GUARD AT CENTRE

Will go to Delhi soon to wash dirty linen of BJP in public, says KCR

R PRIDHVI RAJ @ Hyderabad

TELANGANA Chief Minister K Chandrasekhar Rao on Sunday doubled down on his resolve for a change of the guard at the Centre as the continuance of the present dispensation would spell doom for the entire country.

Speaking to the media at his official residence Pragati Bhavan, Rao, covering a wide gamut of issues of national importance, said, "We have to drive the BJP out at any cost. It is about time that the people had to be awakened on the need for ushering in a new system of governance. If you awaken people, they themselves will lead you. All leaders would have to go after them," he said and reminded that this was the line on which the Telangana movement was built and it is now history how effective it had proved to be.

To a question, he said that if necessary he would form a party at the national level to further the cause of the movement which he wants to be built in a peaceful and democratic manner. "In a day or two, I might visit Mumbai and discuss the issues at stake with my Maharashtra counterpart Uddhav Thackeray. Very soon, I will be in Delhi, to wash the dirty linen of the BJP in the public," he said. He, however, evaded answers to whether he would work with Congress to take the movement forward.

When pressed for an answer whether the Congress would be part of the formation that he is trying to evolve to throw the BJP out lock, stock and barrel, he said he cannot say anything at present. "I am more interested in the effort to awaken people. I am working in this direction. I do not know who will come along with me. But I will definitely play an important role in the shape of things set to emerge in future," the Chief Minister elaborated.

Rao acted cagey when sought for a direct answer on whether he would attend the non-Congress and non-BJP chief minister's conference, which West Bengal CM Mamata Banerjee is going to organise to condemn the way the BJP was denigrating and abusing the institution of governors.

Rao, while speaking about the national alternative, mused on how leaders are born.

"No one had thought Neelam Sanjiva Reddy will become the President. Film heroes MGR and NTR became Chief Ministers. Even Modi who sold tea became the PM. My mother did not know that I would become the CM when I was born," he said, dropping subtle hints that he too was game for the leadership of the nation if the opportunity presented itself to him.

Referring to hijab row in Karnataka, he said that it was time that a concerted effort should be made to see that religion should not divide people and derail economic growth and prosperity.

BJP ready for 'war' if KCR wants it: Minister

Hyderabad: Asserting that the BJP was ready for war if the TRS really wanted it, Union Minister for Tourism and Culture G Kishan Reddy said that he would soon present a comprehensive response to Chief Minister K Chandrasekhar Rao's outbursts and allegations.

Telangana Chief Minister K Chandrasekhar Rao attacks the BJP by showing a copy of the book *'I am a troll: Inside the Secret World of the BJP's Digital Army'* during a press conference in Hyderabad on Sunday | EXPRESS

'Dialogue fallout of face-off between Mamata, Bengal Guv'

CONTINUED FROM PAGE 1

TAMIL NADU Chief Minister and DMK chief MK Stalin also pointed out that the Assembly was prorogued following a recommendation by the state government.

According to TMC sources, Mamata has been upset with the governor's alleged overstepping of his constitutional rights. "Though she is yet to communicate with us about her conversations with the Tamil Nadu CM, it appears the dialogue was a fallout of the face-off between her and the Bengal governor," said a senior TMC leader.

Late in the evening, Mamata and Stalin were joined by Telangana Chief Minister K Chandrasekhar Rao though in the fight against the BJP.

ISRO's first launch of 2022 to put 3 satellites into orbit

EXPRESS NEWS SERVICE @ Bengaluru

BY the time this news reaches the readers, the Indian Space Research Organisation (ISRO) in its first launch of 2022 would have launched its radar imaging satellite, Earth Observation Satellite-04 (EOS-04) along with two co-passenger satellites on board Polar Satellite Launch Vehicle, PSLV-C52, from the First Launch Pad of Satish Dhawan Space Centre, Sriharikota. The launch of PSLV-C52 to put the three satellites into orbit is scheduled at 5:59 am on February 14 (Monday).

The two other satellites are student satellite INSPIREsat-1 (IS-1) from Indian Institute of Space science & Technology (IIST) in association with Laboratory of Atmospheric & Space Physics (LASP) at University of Colorado, Boulder, the National Central University (NCU) in Taiwan and the Nanyang Technological University (NTU) in Singapore; and a technology demonstrator satellite (INS-2TD) from ISRO, which is a precursor to India-Bhutan Joint Satellite (INS-2B).

The PSLV-C52 launcher, in the 54th launch of the PSLV series, will put the 1,710 kg EOS-04 earth observation satellite into a Sun synchronous polar orbit of 529 km.

The EOS-04 is a radar imaging satellite designed to provide high quality images under all-weather conditions for applications such as agriculture, forestry and plantations, soil moisture & hydrology and flood mapping.

The countdown process of 25 hours and 30 minutes leading to the launch commenced at 4.29 am on Sunday, ISRO said in a tweet.

The IS-1 micro-satellite by IIST, LASP, NCU and NTU — under the International Satellite Program in Research and Education (INSPIRE) consortium of universities with active space programmes, formed to advance space science and engineering — carries a Compact Ionospheric Probe (CIP) developed at NCU, a Dual-zone Aperture X-ray Solar Spectrometer (DAXSS) developed at LASP, and a Command and Data Handling board developed by IIST.

The IS-1 will study Earth's dynamic ionosphere, the solar X-ray radiation, and the Sun's corona and the temperature compared to its photosphere.

The agreement over developing and launching the India-Bhutan satellite INS-2B was signed by R Umamaheswaran, Scientific Secretary, ISRO, and Jigme Tenzing, Director, Department of Department of Information Technology and Telecom, Bhutan, on September 24, 2021.

As per the agreement, four Bhutanese engineers are being trained at ISRO's UR Rao Satellite center (URSC) from December 2020 in theoretical and technical aspects in the first phase, and on aspects of developing the INS-2B satellite for Bhutan and the precursor technology development satellite INS-2TD in the second phase. The date of launching INS-2B is yet to be confirmed.

The satellite will be used to map Bhutan's natural resources and for disaster management. An India-Bhutan Joint working group is implementing the project.

President Ram Nath Kovind addresses a gathering after unveiling the statue of Sri Ramanujacharya on Sunday | EXPRESS

Prez unveils 120kg gold statue of Ramanujacharya

EXPRESS NEWS SERVICE @ Hyderabad

DESCRIBING Ramanujacharya as the form of spiritual greatness, equality and the golden future of India, President Ram Nath Kovind on Sunday said that the Constitution, which is based on our cultural heritage and egalitarian ideals, was drafted by our founding fathers who were greatly influenced by the teachings and ideology of the saint.

Addressing a gathering after unveiling the 120-kg golden statue of Ramanujacharya at the Sri Ram Nagar (JIVA campus) in Mucchintal on Sunday, the President said that equality before law, prohibition of all forms of discrimination, equality of opportunity, abolition of untouchability, which are enshrined in the Constitution are nothing but percolation of Ramanujacharya's teachings. "Our concept of equality was not derived from western countries, but was developed through the cultural style of the country with the eternal ideal of 'Vasudhaiva Kutumbakam,' with equality being the cornerstone of our democracy," he said. Talking about Ramanujacharya's 'Vishist Adwaid', he said that it was not only a contribution to philosophy, but its relevance in day-to-day life remains as strong. "On the other hand, philosophy in the West has been reduced to a subject of scholarly study," the President said. "Thanks to Ramanujacharya, who showed that Bhakti was not just a matter of dry analysis but is a way of world analysis that has always remained true in India," Kovind said.

All we want is some recognition: Assistant bandmaster

CONTINUED FROM PAGE 1

THERE are 27 different types of Carnatic instruments and around 30 Western instruments playing at the same time, which makes it unique. These include clarinets, piccolos, bassoons, saxophone, ultra saxophones, french horns, and many more.

Assistant bandmaster, R Mohan, who plays both clarinet and veena, and a third-generation musician said that his father, D Ramappa, and grandfather, R Dasappa, used to play clarinet and trombone, respectively. Mohan, with more than 30 years of experience, was recruited from the Home Department. "Our band's sanctioned post is 82, including 32 from the Carnatic music team, and 50 from Western music team. The number of people working has reduced to 56, including 11 new members, who were recruited last year. Earlier, there was no recruitment for 15 years. The State Government should recruit once in five years, and only then, the seniors in the team can teach the newcomers," he said. A dearth in the number of required members has affected the quality of music too.

People with a senior grade in instruments (Carnatic) are eligible to apply, while for Western, it is Grade II of Trinity London exams.

On important occasions, like the first Legislature session of the year, Kannada Rajyotsava, Governor taking charge, Dasara and others, the band performs. Practising even today for four to five hours, as well as discharging additional police duty, Mohan said, "All we want is some recognition from the Department of Kannada and Culture, and Indian Council for Cultural Relations."

The Mysuru Police Band has a rich history of more than 160 years | SHRIRAM BN

A BJP team from Belagavi headed by MLA Abhay Patil campaigns in Vasco ahead of the February 14 Assembly elections in Goa | EXPRESS

BJP goes all out to woo Kannadigas in Goa

NAUSHAD BIJAPUR @ Panaji

WITH votes of Kannadiga migrants crucial in several Assembly segments in Goa, a BJP team headed by Belagavi MLA Abhay Patil has been campaigning in all such constituencies for the past one month along with party workers from Karnataka, assuring them that the party would help them in getting all facilities and infrastructure in their localities.

"At least nine Assembly segments in Goa have a population of about 2,000 Kannadiga migrants each. Many of them had migrated to Goa long ago for jobs and business. As the number of voters is not huge in each segment in Goa, every vote is crucial. In many of the constituencies, the margin of victory has been merely in the hundreds," says Patil.

Several Kannadigas residing in different parts of Goa are upset with the Goan government for considering them as outsiders and depriving them of many facilities. Patil said that politicians from Karnataka, including him, had taken up the issue with the ruling BJP in Goa and urged them to treat Kannadigas on par with Goans.

He said that the Goa government headed by Chief Minister Pramod Sawant will ensure that Kannadigas in Goa get all the facilities.

Several Kannadiga migrants, like labourers, do not even have ration and Aadhaar cards despite staying in the coastal state as residents for decades now. "The BJP government will help them get such facilities besides fulfilling all their other major demands if it forms the government again in Goa," added Patil.

Cortalim, Sanvordem, Quepem, Margao, Sanguem, Cudached, Murmugao and Navalim are the constituencies where BJP party workers headed by Patil have campaigned door-to-door. All these constituencies have less than 30,000 voters each.

Several migrants in and around Vasco constituency told *The New Indian Express* that successive governments in Goa did not consider them as Goans even as the state shares a strong bond with Karnataka as far as its business and trade is considered. "Such a neglect of Kannadags in Goa has been existing for many years now. It is high time that the Goan leaders take note of this issue seriously in the coming days," said a migrant.

However, the migrants are happy this time with the initiative taken up by the BJP to send legislators and party workers from Karnataka to their doorstep ahead of polls. They said they had some hope of getting their demands fulfilled this time around.

18 companies of KSRP on poll duty in UP, Goa

BALA CHAUHAN @ Bengaluru

INDIAN elections, besides being an unimpeachable and definitive process of democracy, are also great unifiers. The movement of state police personnel from one end of the country to the other for election duty is a great effort in coordination and exchange of ideas among various linguistic, cultural and ethnic groups of uniformed personnel.

"Karnataka has deputed 10 companies comprising 1,000 Karnataka State Reserve Police (KSRP) personnel to Uttar Pradesh and eight companies comprising 800 personnel to Goa for deployment during the Assembly elections there," said Additional Director General of Police (ADGP), KSRP, Alok Kumar. "The Ministry of Home Affairs had recently called for a meeting with all the states regarding deployment of state reserve police forces for election duty in the five poll- bound states. I had attended the meeting," he elaborated.

He said that all Covid-19 protocols were followed before the KSRP men left for election duty. "They are vaccinated against Covid-19 with three doses, including precaution dose. Besides Covid, there was an issue of weather acclimatisation. We have ensured the KSRP personnel with adequate winter clothing and accessories," he added. "I told our men that they must use this opportunity to showcase the humane side of police and to reach out to people and help them cast their vote. I was happy to see that despite a language barrier, our men are doing a fine job in making people-to-people contact," he said.

He also congratulated the Uttar Pradesh police for their hospitality. "Winters and hectic election duty apart, they did ensure that our men visit the Taj Mahal in Agra," said the IPS officer in a lighter vein.

With the first phase of elections in Western UP, which included Agra and Mathura, complete, police forces are now moving to Saharanpur for the second phase.

EXPRESS READ

TTD to issue darshan tokens offline

TIRUPATI: With Covid-19 cases declining, the Tirumala Tirupati Devasthanams has decided to resume issuance of Slotted Sarva Darshan tokens offline from February 15. The tokens will be issued at Srinivasam, Bhudevi Complex and Govindaraju Satram. About 15,000 tokens will be issued a day for the next day's darshan on a first-come, first-served basis. ENS

Farmer joins Hyundai row, to return car

MAHESH M GOUDAR @ Vijayapura

IRKED by Hyundai Motors' post on supporting Kashmir Solidarity Day, which is observed by Pakistan, a 30-year-old farmer has decided to return his Hyundai car to the South Korean automotive manufacturing firm.

Santosh Chowdy, a resident of Vijayapura, has put up a poster on the front and rear of his car, stating, "I am ashamed to drive this car which is an anti-national company. #JaiHind." Speaking to *TNIE*, he said, "My nation comes first for me. If I don't boycott Hyundai, it will be like disrespecting our soldiers.

Meanwhile, the proprietor of local Hyundai Motors, said, "After this incident, customers asked for the cancellation of the bookings. We have managed to convince them to reverse their decision."

PROTECTIVE STEP

Steel wires to stop jumbos from straying out of forests

BOSKY KHANNA @ Bengaluru

ELEPHANTS have outsmarted all methods tried in the past by the Karnataka Forest Department to keep them confined inside wildlife sanctuaries and national parks and prevent them from straying into human habitats. But now the success achieved by Tamil Nadu foresters in the Cauvery Wildlife Sanctuary near Hosur is going to be replicated in Nagarahole Tiger Reserve (NTR) soon.

The Karnataka Forest Department will for the first time use steel wire fence instead of solar or rail barricades in NTR to prevent elephants from venturing outside the forest.

"In this method, elephants do not get a sturdy base to stand or rest on. The steel ropes will bounce back and this will confuse the animal. The elephant will not get any grip to climb over the ropes. We have got permission from our higher authorities to implement it in Nagarahole. Now, we need to find manufacturers of such ropes," D Mahesh Kumar, Director, NTR, told *The New Indian Express*.

The steel ropes will be similar to the ones used to make bridges and will be first tried on a 5-km stretch in Veeranahosahalli range of NTR, where there is a problem of human-elephant conflict.

The steel ropes are also cheaper than rail barricades. According to department officials, a km of rail barricade costs Rs 1.2- 1.3 crore, while the cost of steel ropes installed by Tamil Nadu is just Rs50-55 lakh per km.

Over the years, foresters have tried different kinds of barricades like chilli-tobacco rope fence, solar fence, barbed wires, trenches with moats, rail barricades and even honeybee fence to keep elephants inside forests. But the jumbos have found ways to cross the barricades. "We have observed through camera traps elephants breaking solar barricades with logs, climbing over rail barricades and throwing water on chilli-tobacco barricades and escape," explained a forest department official.

EDITORIAL

O stand, stand at the window
As the tears scald and start;
You shall love your crooked
neighbour With your crooked heart

WH Auden

INDIAN EXPRESS IS NOT AN INDUSTRY. IT IS A MISSION.

— Ramnath Goenka

FRAILTIES OF CORPORATE LEADERS STAND EXPOSED AGAIN

The facade of corporate governance and uncompromising processes within private organisations gets demolished every time a case of corruption comes to the fore. The ineffectiveness of these much-talked-about standard operating procedures gets easily exposed every time a larger-than-life corporate leader or executive flouts the norms. The latest revelations in the National Stock Exchange (NSE) case, where former MD and CEO of NSE Chitra Ramkrishna sidestepped all the processes in place to appoint a virtually unknown and unworthy person as group operating officer, once again proves the vulnerabilities of corporate governance procedures laid down on paper.

The NSE, which has already been facing allegations of giving preferential treatment to several brokers in what is now famously called Collocation Scam, is once again in the midst of controversy—this time for complete breach of internal procedures while appointing Anand Subramanian, a mid-level corporate executive, as advisor and later group operating officer. Some of the revelations in this case are appalling and ludicrous. It has been revealed in an investigation instituted by Sebi that both Chitra and Anand were guided by a spiritual guru. While we do not know if that unknown person exerting influence on NSE bosses was indeed a guru, it certainly exposes the frailties of corporate bigwigs. We have seen in the past how greed and loyalty to political masters have led to corporate superstars ignoring propriety and morality.

In a cut-throat world of competition, maintaining the highest standards of ethical values is difficult. Killing competition, currying favours with people in power, favouritism, corporate espionage, etc., are not uncommon in a world driven by profitability, insecurity and the pressure to put up stellar performance every quarter. And while businesses have created wealth, generated employment and given a good name to the country, worshipping corporate leaders is not the best thing to do; acknowledging their contributions is good enough.

PEOPLE'S CONCERNS NOT PART OF POLL DISCOURSE

It's poll time again in Tamil Nadu and going by the rhetoric flying around, an outsider would be forgiven for assuming political parties were fighting a national election. Over the past week, DMK president and Chief Minister M K Stalin and AIADMK joint coordinator Edappadi K Palaniswami have traded swipes over NEET. Since the inception of the medical entrance test, Tamil Nadu has sought to be exempted from it. This change in discourse (from targeted attacks on governance) was precipitated by the Governor's surprising move of sending a Bill passed by the Assembly, exempting admissions to government medical seats in the state from the test, back to the House for reconsideration. Amid the charged back-and-forth, the focus may have shifted from the elections being held in the state. After a gap of 10 years, the people of Tamil Nadu will be electing representatives to urban local bodies. The state has much to be proud of—be it on economic development or with regard to human development indicators. Yet it is no point of pride that it has taken 10 years for these elections to be conducted.

Local bodies are the basic unit of Indian democracy. It is village panchayats, town panchayats, municipalities and corporations that provide the first level of representation and governance for the people. Yet neither are manifestos put out for these elections nor are key leaders focusing much on civic issues. These have been left to the candidates to deal with on a local level on grounds that the concerns vary from ward to ward. However, coverage of the concerns of residents show that people's desires remain largely the same across the board: better roads, functional drainage systems and potable water. While some of the concerns might indeed be particular to one ward or another, better civic services, which will have to be provided by cash-strapped local bodies, is a common demand. These are concerns that ought to take centrestage in poll campaigns and discourse of senior leaders as well, to acknowledge how essential local bodies are to ensure better quality of life to the people.

The US began the Ukraine initiative and seems to hope to suck European allies into it. The reservations of France and Germany are understandable

UKRAINE CRISIS, U.S. UNILATERALISM & INDIA'S DILEMMA

SOUMYADIP SINHA

N SATHIYA MOORTHY
Distinguished Fellow and Head-Chennai Initiative, ORF

The evolving Ukraine crisis seems to be exposing post-Cold War fissures in the US-led NATO combine as only their post-9/11 Afghan engagement had done earlier. There is now an add-on difference. Continental powers like France and Germany, unlike the UK that is relatively far away, do not want to be handed down a fait accompli any more. Nor do they want the 20th century tensions—beginning with the two World Wars and later the Cold War until the collapse of the Soviet Union— returning to their doorsteps. Should Russia 'behave', NATO's relevance too may be lost for many European member-nations.

The Franco-German reservations about the US threats to Russia on Ukraine are standalone affairs but understandable. Unreported, they were also peeved at the unilateral US pullout from Afghanistan, the same way Washington had drawn them into the Afghan war earlier—but without the kind of post-9/11 moral authority it had at the time.

France's strong reservations about Australia's nuclear submarine deal with the US after cancelling the committed orders for non-nuclear subs from Paris was also an expression of resentment over the independent American creation of Quad and Indo-Pacific without consulting and involving them. Their experience is that the US won't hesitate to unilaterally draw NATO into the Quad's future wars in the Indo-Pacific, if any.

There is nothing to suggest that France and Germany are acting in tandem, or there are consultations between them. There is also nothing to suggest that they have not been in touch. There are however reasons to believe that Washington did not consult NATO allies, especially France and Germany, who count the most in the Continent, on a NATO war in Europe if Russia wanted one on Ukraine.

As in the past, the US began the Ukraine initiative and seems to hope to suck European allies into it by urging them to mediate with Russia. The wars in Afghanistan and Iraq did not involve NATO as an idea. But the threatened European war on Ukraine is about NATO admittance for Ukraine. The US wants to make it a NATO war, if fought, over a non-NATO member. It is both ironical and illogical.

The question is who blinks first, how and when. If the US yields and says NATO won't admit Ukraine, it loses face on the global stage, and President Joe Biden loses votes nearer home. If NATO admits Ukraine, then they could have a war in Europe, which western Europe at least seems to want to avoid. Yet, can they allow a limited war on Ukraine, with Russia possibly winning it?

President Vladimir Putin has told leaders from western Europe that if Ukraine was admitted, NATO would be at Russia's doorsteps, and together the two sides would face eternal tension (as during the Cold War). But a Russian annexation of Ukraine, or even a war for Ukraine, too would do that. For Europe to breathe easy, NATO should not admit Ukraine, yes. But Russia too should give verifiable, iron-clad guarantees that it would not start a war on Ukraine later on. Moscow's annexation of Crimea does not give such confidence.

In the midst of it, by staying away from the Winter Olympics in Beijing, the West provided the best global stage the other side could have hoped for in this pandemic era, or even otherwise. India did not attend the inaugural but the specific reason was linked to China choosing a Galwan soldier as a torchbearer. By appearing in the inaugural and using the occasion for bilateral talks with host Xi Jinping, Putin and Prime Minister Imran Khan of Pakistan diverted some of the global attention away from Ukraine and Europe, and back towards China and Xi.

> India's worries are related to its ties with Moscow, not knowing what to make out of the triangulated relations with China at the apex, Russia and Pakistan forming independent, yet interdependent arms

The message is more crucial for India than for the US and Europe, not necessarily in that order. Any escalation of current tensions in Europe could simultaneously spread it across India's northern neighbourhood—along the border with China and Pakistan, going all the way through Afghanistan, Iran and Central Asia. India has security interests up to Afghanistan, starting with the protection of the border, viz. China and Pakistan, and also trade and political interests elsewhere.

But India's dilemma would be more directly related to ties with Moscow, not knowing what to make out of the triangulated relations with China at the apex and Russia and Pakistan forming independent, yet interdependent arms. The question is how far could Russia let China relations amid the Ukraine tensions not influence its India ties—and by extension, an India-Pakistan situation, if it came to that. India will also come under added American pressure now, especially over Russia-supplied S-400 missiles and threatened US sanctions.

Under the changing environment outside NATO but impacting the grouping's future over the medium and long terms, New Delhi will be watching with interest the evolving Indian Ocean geopolitics and geostrategy, where the European Union jointly, and France and Germany separately, have unfolded their own versions of Indo-Pacific, if not a Quad-like arrangement as yet. Already, the EU has begun scouting for Indo-Pacific allies in India's neighbourhood, beginning with Sri Lanka.

Germany is a quiet economic power waiting to shed its 20th century political past. France has more island territory in the Indo-Pacific than any other global power. It is as much a military supplier for India as the US is a military ally in the post-Cold War era. A lot of food for Indian thought.

(sathiyam54@nsathiyamoorthy.com)

POTENTIAL AND PROSPECTS OF FARMER COLLECTIVES

SAMBIT TRIPATHY
Former IRS officer and Founder of Livelihood Alternatives, a start-up

The Covid-19 pandemic has been a defining moment in public policy discourse. It has impacted all aspects of the economy across regions and countries. The trade-off between life and livelihood was a difficult choice for most governments. Strict enforcement of lockdown across the globe impacted economic activities, employment and income. India was no exception, witnessing contraction in Gross Value Added (GVA) by 6.2%. However, one sector that withstood the tsunami was agriculture, registering an above-average real growth of 3.6% in 2020–21. Agriculture was a cushion that could absorb the shock and provided much-needed succour to 49% of the total households (PLFS, 2020) who continue to depend on it as a primary livelihood option. It is but natural that special measures were to be taken to strengthen the sector.

These periods of crisis also offer opportunities to governments across the world to usher in administrative innovations. One of the initiatives that seeks to re-engineer the agri landscape of the country is an ambitious target of creating new 10,000 farmer collectives, i.e. Farmer Producer Organisations (FPOs), in the country. The legal origin of the concept can be traced to the Alagh Committee Report of 2000. This enabled creation of hybrid entities-producer companies with cooperative intent. There are a total of 14,213 producer companies on the rolls of the Ministry of Corporate Affairs as on 31.03.2021. Around 11,715 producer companies got registered after 2016–17. What distinguishes the present effort is the mission-mode approach. The total outlay is to the tune of ₹3,000 crore to be spent over next three years, bringing together approximately 3 million farmers across the country. Unlike other agrarian interventions, there appears to be a broad consensus on the objective, intent and purpose of the scheme.

A flagship programme of the Ministry of Agriculture and Farmers' Welfare, it is being implemented by organisations with pan-India presence such as NABARD, NAFED, Small Farmer Agribusiness Consortium (SFAC), National Cooperative Development Corporation (NCDC), etc. The basic objective underpinning the effort is to provide economic depth to small and marginal farmers and make agriculture a viable livelihood option for them. It will enable such collectives to establish value chains associated with identified agri-commodities by leveraging the available government schemes, enhance bargaining power, promote disengagement with the intermediaries through direct access to markets/market players and facilitate creation of effective pressure groups in the agrarian sector. Though the schematic outlay seems promising to various stakeholders, implementation at the grassroots has its own set of challenges.

In India, any social formation cannot be divorced from the realities of caste, class and gender. The asymmetry of power in a rural set-up will invariably get reflected in the power structures that such new-age social formations will create. Instances of dominant land-owning classes or even middlemen traders occupying vantage positions within the FPOs as directors in the board are not uncommon. This results in converting an informal exploitative mechanism into a formal one. It will be crucial on the part of the implementing agencies to undertake periodic social audits to ensure that new collectives conform to the principles of social and economic inclusion, gender participation and remain politically neutral blocks.

The administrative innovation that distinguishes present efforts of the government from past interventions is the responsibility entrusted to an intermediary group called the Cluster Based Business Organisation (CBBO) and the creation of a new cadre of agri-professionals called Local Resource Persons (LRPs). The competence, commitment and capacity of the two will decide the ultimate outcome.

The CBBOs are envisaged as professional civil society organisations drawing personnel from diverse backgrounds. Newly formed FPOs will be provided with necessary legal, financial, agronomic and marketing support through various phases of origin, growth and maturity through such professional bodies. Accordingly, selecting CBBOs with necessary credentials and periodic weeding out of non-performing ones that consistently fail to meet various deliverables are critical to adhering to various timelines associated with the scheme. The CBBOs are expected to keep experienced personnel to oversee implementation and therefore, timely payment to them should be prioritised. Most of the CBBOs do not have deep pockets and consistency in cash-flow benchmarked to deliverables is crucial to retain talent. Delayed payments have been the bane of the development sector. An appropriate SOP should be devised to avoid the pitfalls of earlier experiments. The other component for success or failure is the foot-soldier—Local Resource Persons (LRPs), who may eventually don the role of CEOs of the FPOs. Most of them hail from a rural background, with little exposure to the world of trade or to the nuances of commercial entities. What they may be lacking is compensated by the excitement of associating themselves with a venture that has the promise of transforming the rural-agri landscape. So capacity building should be an area of focus. Appropriate curriculum and career pathways should be designed that would periodically train potential FPO leaders in human resource management, demand-aggregation, logistical planning and financial management. The responsibility should not be left to the CBBOs alone. The government should identify reputed institutional partners like IIMs, IRMA, etc., to deliver content and certify successful candidates. This will make the job aspirational for rural educated youth and incentivise their participation in the national project.

> One of the initiatives that seeks to re-engineer the agri landscape of the country is an ambitious target of creating new 10,000 farmer collectives. There are administrative innovations that distinguish present efforts of the government from past interventions

Last but not the least, such a mammoth exercise in social experimentation in the agrarian sector can only succeed if various departments of the Centre and states come together on a common platform. Cutting through departmental silos, orientation and training of key officials manning relevant departments and timely inter-departmental coordination are key to the success of the governmental intervention. For instance, lack of clarity on the role and legal status of FPOs amongst the bankers is leading to inordinate delay in opening of bank accounts, adversely impacting business prospects of the newly formed entities. Absence of standardised procedure for issuing farmer identification certificates has resulted in rampant misuse by unscrupulous elements in floating FPOs using forged certificates. The certificates establish credentials of a farmer, making him eligible to be a member of the collective. A mechanism to ensure integrity of such certificates should be worked out to provide comfort to officers of the Registrar of Companies. The collectives being tax-exempt entities, due caution and care are needed, lest they are used as vehicles for tax evasion and money laundering. The fact that some 6,000 producer companies got registered during the year 2020–21, under conditions of restricted mobility on account of Covid-induced lockdown, does not sit comfortably with the overall scheme of things.

The FPOs as new-age farmer collectives have immense transformative potential for a country like India. If implemented with the right intentions and active involvement of various public and private stakeholders, this will not just boost agriculture productivity but also create an enabling ecosystem for the value chains associated with each agri-commodity. India can thus become an important player in the global food value chain.

MAILBAG

WRITE TO: letters@newindianexpress.com

A jumbo threat

This is with reference to *Electric fence kills elephant in Kovai, 2 farm owners on the run* (Feb 13). Electricity seems to be a greater threat to the lives of elephants than poaching. The practice of illegal drawing of electricity from overhead power lines to create live-wire fences around crop fields has to be stopped.

N Rama Rao, Chennai

PM shouldn't stay silent

This is with reference to *Silence is no solution to evil* (Feb 13). Silence nourishes ineptitude in governance like manure. Former prime minister Manmohan Singh was eloquently silent, and corruption grew like thistles in public life. His successor too adopted silence where verbosity would have sent the right signals to forces in India undermining trust among minorities. It is time the right kind of words are spoken by the prime minister at the right time to make sure the nation heads in the right direction.

Dr George Jacob, Kochi

A victim of its politicians

No academic and no citizen can change the politician's inherent nature. Politics has ceased to be a service and turned out to be a lucrative profession sans scruples. India is a victim of such elements and there is no way out unless some sincere people emerge.

U K Atiyodi, Payyanur

Much ado about nothing

This is with reference to *Stalin's politics fuels new national federalism* (Feb 13). Much ado is being made of the TN chief minister's national political aspirations. This is at best a repeat of Chandrababu Naidu's similar foray into national politics when his state government was facing the heat. At worst, it is a ploy to divert attention, leveraging his great equation with the media. The article forgets that NEET is a creation of the UPA, of which the DMK was a prominent part, and education was moved to the Concurrent List during the rule of its ally, the Congress. And people from various castes—including members of the Scheduled Castes—have long been priests in the state's numerous temples. So the TN government hasn't done anything transformational.

Ram K N, email

Another party of dynasts

The author appears overawed by the chief minister's politics. Like various other regional outfits, the DMK is a party of dynasts who seek to acquire power for self and progeny. The open display of identity only shows the party's narrow mindset.

Hemanth Bhide, Mangaluru

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TWEETS OF THE DAY

Priyanka Gandhi @priyankagandhi
My fight is against unemployment, poverty and atrocities on women in Uttar Pradesh. My struggle is for the betterment of Uttar Pradesh

Yogi Adityanath @myogiadityanath
Riding on the wave of nationalism, there is roar of victory for the BJP. The 'genie' of 'jinnawadis' is being 'unloaded' by people

Akhilesh Yadav @yadavakhilesh
The people of Shahjahanpur are going to hit the 'Super Sixer' going across the stadium on all the six seats here, the BJP will keep looking for the ball!

ASSEMBLY ELECTION 2022 I DECIDE

Will win with big majority: Manipur CM

PRASANTA MAZUMDAR @Guwahati

MANIPUR Chief Minister N Biren Singh on Sunday said he is confident that the BJP will retain power with absolute majority and there is no question of hung Assembly.

"The question of a hung House will not arise. I am not saying it without any basis. I am calculative," Singh told journalists amid the perception of a fractured mandate. Singh's arithmetic and resultant belief stem from the possible victory of the BJP's 29 sitting MLAs.

"There are 60 seats and we have fielded 29 sitting MLAs. Their winnability is very high," he claimed, adding, "It will be very easy for the BJP to add another 11 to the tally to achieve majority."

BJP ally National People's Party (NPP) as well as opposition Congress pooh-poohed Singh's claim and asked him to be realistic.

The NPP said the BJP would win a maximum of 15-17 seats – around 10-12 in the Imphal Valley and not more than five in the hills. "Of the 29 BJP MLAs fielded, not more than four are winning. This is the harsh ground reality," NPP state general secretary Sheikh Noorul Hassan said.

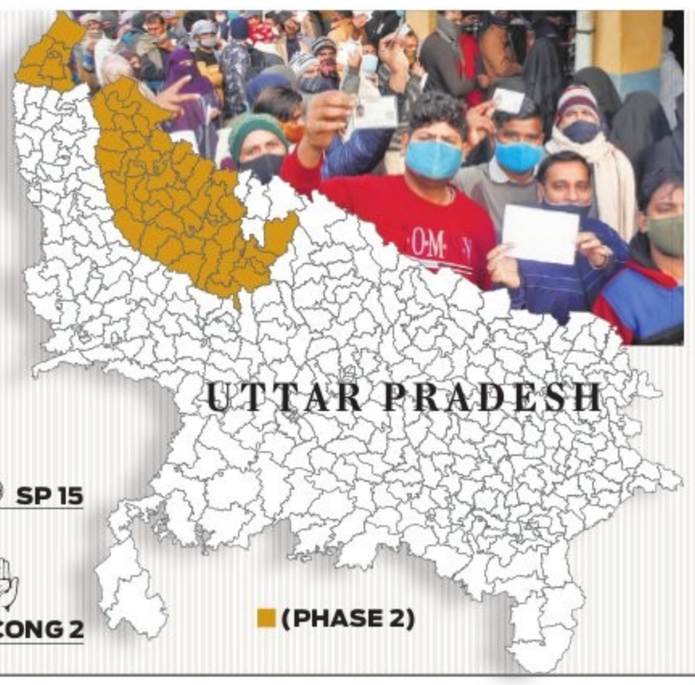
The Congress said it is the BJP's nature to always "exceed reality". "Everyone, including the CM, knows the BJP will not get absolute majority," Congress spokesperson K Debabrata said.

55 SEATS | 9 DISTRICTS | 586 CANDIDATES

4 MINISTERS IN THE FRAY

Suresh Khanna (Shahjahanpur), **Gulabo Devi** (Chanduasi), **Baldev Singh Aulakh** (Billaspur), **Mahesh Chandra Gupta** (Badaun Urban)

2017 RESULTS



BIG FIGHTS

THE SECOND PHASE WILL SEE VETERANS LIKE SP'S MOHAMMAD AZAM KHAN AND STATE FINANCE MINISTER SURESH KHANNA TRYING THEIR LUCK

NAKUR: This seat in Saharanpur district is seeing a high-profile contest. Former Yogi cabinet minister Dharam Singh Saini has left BJP and is fighting on an SP ticket. He has won this seat four times. BJP has fielded Mukesh Chaudhury to take on Saini. Sahil Khan is the BSP candidate and Randhir Singh Chauhan is representing Congress

SHAHJAHANPUR: Finance Minister Suresh Khanna is the BJP candidate. He has been representing this constituency since 1989. SP has fielded Tanvir Khan. BSP and Congress have given tickets to Sarvesh Chandra Dhandhu and Poonam, respectively

RAMPUR: Lodged in Sitapur district jail for two years now, SP MP Azam Khan is the star candidate here. BJP has fielded Akash Saxena and BSP Sadakat Hussain. Kazim Ali Khan is the Congress candidate

SUAR: Azam Khan's son Abdullah is the SP candidate in this stronghold of the Khans. Abdullah was in jail in connection with around 43 cases for the last two years. Abdullah had won in 2017, but his election was declared null and void after Allahabad HC found him guilty of forging age documents. He is challenged by Haider Ali Khan, NDA's only Muslim candidate. Haider is representing Apna Dal (S). BSP has fielded Shankar Lal Saini and Congresss Ram Rakshpal Singh

BILASPUR: Baldev Singh Aulakh, the only Sikh minister in the Yogi cabinet, is the BJP candidate. SP has fielded Amarjit Singh, BSP Ram Avtar Kashyap and Congress Sanjai Kapoor

CHANDAUSI: This is expected to be an interesting battle as BJP, SP and Congress have all fielded women candidates in this reserved seat. BSP's Ranvijay Singh is the lone exception. BJP has fielded Gulabo Devi, the sitting MLA and minister of state for basic education. SP has opted for Vimlesh Kumari and Congress Mithilesh Kumari

KUNDARKI: SP has fielded Ziyaurrehman Barq, grandson of MP Shafiqurehman Barq. SP has denied sitting MLA Haji Rzwan a ticket and he is contesting for BSP. BJP has fielded Kamla Prajapati and Congress Daraksha Begum

TILHAR: SP is banking on BJP turncoat and sitting MLA Roshan Lala Verma, who left BJP with Swami Prasad Maurya last month. BJP has fielded Salona Kushwaha, BSP Nawab Faizan Ali Khan and Congress Rajneesh Gupta

Inputs: Namita Bajpai

Immoral to look at voters on basis of religion or caste: Varun Gandhi

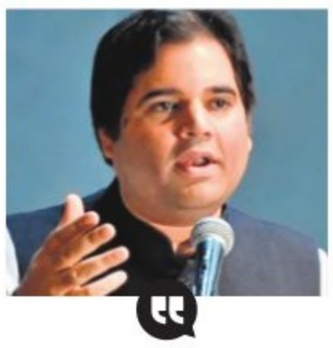
BJP MP says farmers still awaiting answers from govt on issues like MSP, quashing of cases

SHAHID FARIDI @ New Delhi

BJP MP and former general secretary Varun Gandhi thinks price rise, unemployment, and farmers' unrest are the main issues in the ongoing Uttar Pradesh elections, and the state will not vote on the Hindu-Muslim issue.

In an interview with this daily, the MP from Pilibhit rejected his party's pitch to make it an 80% versus 20% election. "It is immoral to look at any voter on the basis of religion or caste. I consider the voter the biggest stakeholder, either you include him in your decisions, or else he will not include you in his decisions," he said.

"In this election, voters of UP have to answer these basic questions through their vote: Has corruption on the ground reduced under this five-year government? Was justice done to the farmers? Has the public got relief from the impact of inflation? How long will the contractual workers have to wait for justice?"



Whatever noise you hear is of Hindu-Muslim or backward-forward. In fact, the vote will not be on any of such divisive issues

Varun Gandhi, BJP MP

Gandhi said that in 2017, people gave BJP a huge mandate in the hope that there would be a radical change across the state. "Not just in infrastructure, but in the entire system of governance. But have these hopes of the people been fulfilled?"

He said unemployment is another big issue. "Did you see what happened during the Railway Recruitment Board examinations? 1.25 crore students applied for 35,000 posts of RRB-NTPC. When the Railway started talking about 5% recruitment instead of 20%, patience of the students was naturally broken and they protested. The police lashed out at them with sticks."

He also said that inflation has made things difficult for the public. "People will be able to breathe a sigh of relief if government schemes are made free of corruption. This time, the election is being fought around important issues like inflation, unemployment, troubled farmers, Dalit oppression and women's safety."

On farmers' agitation, the BJP MP said, "In a democracy, every mass movement has its own strength, its own effect. It has been proven time and again that not only does the people's movement have the ability to change any government, but it also has the strength to create new leadership."

He said that farmers are still waiting for answers from the government. "On the legal guarantee of MSP, compensation for families of the 700-odd who died, quashing of the fake cases filed against them and the resignation of the Union Minister of State for Home in the Lakhimpur Kheri case. If the government continues to ignore these issues, it is likely that the farmers' movement may start again."

To a question if he would contest the next election as a BJP candidate, Gandhi said, "Only time can answer such questions. I aspire for people-based politics. Equitable and inclusive politics is in my blood."

'The Great Chamar' signboard put up by Azad had attracted national attention

No buzz for Azad's party in home turf

SANA SHAKIL @ Saharanpur (UP)

FIVE years after Chandrashekhar Azad, a young firebrand Dalit leader, announced his arrival in the political theatre of Uttar Pradesh as 'The Great Chamar', the buzz around his party — Azad Samaj Party — and the organisation — Bhim Army — seems to have fizzled out. The fight for political dominance in this region, which has a sizeable presence of SC voters, is a two-way contest between BSP and BJP.

Hundreds of posters of Azad Samaj Party (ASP), bearing photos of the party's candidate and of Azad, are visible across Ghadkoli village of Saharanpur Dehat, which goes to polls on February 14.

This was the same village at whose entrance in 2017 Azad had put up a signboard declaring himself as 'The Great Chamar'. Following this, violence had erupted in the village between upper castes and SC youth and Azad was jailed for over a year.

This incident had propelled him as a political leader who is unafraid of taking on the upper caste hegemony.

However, five years later, after Azad founded his own party, Dalit villagers in Ghadkoli feel that politics and activism are two different things.

By and large, the Dalit voters here claim that Mayawati is their true political representative.

Shopkeeper Nivesh Kumar, 54, says, "Azad is our boy but he should not have got into politics against Mayawati. We are with her."

Even those who remained loyal to Azad throughout his activism journey have switched their political allegiance to BSP supremo.

Tinku Gautam, who was among the group of boys who were jailed with Azad in 2017 and has 28 cases against him in connection with the incident, echoes Nivesh's sentiments, "We are with Azad, but our votes are for *Behenji* as it is she who has stood for the rights of Dalits. We do not want votes to be split."

In the Scheduled Caste-dominated Badheri Ghoghu village, concern over votes splitting due to ASP's entry to politics is a major source of concern for a lot of voters. Jitendra Kumar, 41, says, "We are supporting Mayawati as the fight is between BSP and BJP. He should have also ensured that Dalit votes do not get split."

Saharanpur has seven constituencies and the ASP is fighting on all but one seat.

At Azad's home, his mother Kamlesh and elder brother Bhagat Singh are hopeful about the new party's entrance into politics. "Azad and other people in his party have worked very hard for the rights of people and this will show in the election," Singh said.

While many Dalit voters in the district spoke in support of BSP, there were some who spoke favourably of BJP.

TNIE @ GROUND ZERO

Women's share in Punjab politics not promising

HARPREET BAJWA @Chandigarh

PUNJAB has 117 Assembly seats, for which 1,304 candidates have filed nominations. Standing out in this list is the low number of women. In all, there are 93 women candidates. The mainstream parties have fielded 37, smaller parties 28, while 29 are fighting as independents.

Women constitute a significant part of the vote bank. Of the 2.14 voters, 1.02 crore are women. The parties realise this and offer incentives to women to vote for them. For example, AAP has promised ₹1,000 per month to every woman above 18 years of age. Shiromani Akali Dal has promised ₹2,000 per month and so has Congress.

Of the 11 women fielded by Congress, seven have been in politics for a long period. Of the 12 female candidates of AAP, two are sitting MLAs. In the BJP list, one is the daughter-in-law of a former BJP MLA is a Congress turncoat.

Political expert Ronki Ram of Panjab University says, "Membership of women in political parties is less and women are not actively involved in politics. So when it comes to fielding women candidates, you don't find many. The structure of parties needs to change to make women more active. Besides, women empowerment is needed and much more needs to be done. For example, if a woman becomes the sarpach in a village, she is known by her husband's name and effectively, doesn't get to do much."

Inderjit Kaur Maan of AAP, who is contesting from Nakodar, is confident that the future is bright for women in politics. "Women are coming forward and in future, more of them will join politics. The traditional parties discouraged them, but now they are coming forward. We do not want 33% reservation. We will fight and win our place to reach the 50% mark."

Karan Kaur Brar of Congress, who is contesting from Muktsar, believes women have a better future. "Political parties should field more women as issues of women are not properly raised in the Assembly or Parliament and we get neglected."

93 Women candidates

37 FROM MAINSTREAM PARTIES

28 From smaller parties

29 Independents

2017 POLLS

80 Women candidates

29 Big parties

6 Women MLAs

GIVE POWER IN STRONG HANDS TO ENSURE PUNJAB'S SECURITY: SHAH

EXPRESS NEWS SERVICE @ Chandigarh

STATING that security is the biggest issue in the border state of Punjab, Union Home Minister Amit Shah on Sunday urged voters to "give power in such hands which will strengthen the security of Punjab and the country".

Addressing an election rally in Patiala, Shah said Punjab's peace and security were important for the security of the country. He claimed that only an NDA government in the state, which will work closely with the central government, can ensure peace, harmony and security here.

In this context, Shah had special praise for former chief minister Capt Amarinder Singh, who was also sitting on the dais, that he always rose above partisan considerations when it came to the issues concerning national security. He said that when he became the home minister in 2019, he felt quite concerned about the security along the Punjab border. "But once I spoke to Capt Amarinder, I felt relaxed," he recalled.

Shah said the way the Congress had treated a senior leader like Capt Amarinder, it (Congress) must not get a single seat from Patiala.

Referring to the drug menace, Shah said drugs will be completely wiped out from Punjab if Narendra Modi is given a chance. "Our government will open full-time branches of narcotics bureau in Jalandhar, Ludhiana, Amritsar and Patiala, and will make Punjab drug-free in a year. Neither Akalis nor Congress nor Kejriwal can solve the problem," he said.

Amarinder operated under Centre's instructions, says Priyanka

EXPRESS NEWS SERVICE @ Chandigarh

CONGRESS general secretary Priyanka Gandhi Vadra on Sunday attacked former Punjab CM Amarinder Singh, saying that his government was working on the directions of BJP in Delhi under a tactical understanding. She added that AAP has the same agenda, to govern Punjab from Delhi on the directions of Arvind Kejriwal.

Addressing elections rallies at Kotkapura and Dhuri, Priyanka said, "This forced us to change the leadership in the state, so that the Punjab government operated from Punjab, not Delhi. So do not repeat the mistake by supporting AAP which has the same agenda to govern Punjab from Delhi."

She called AAP a branch of the RSS, which has an ideology similar to BJP. "BJP came to power at the Centre by misleading people in 2014, showcasing its Gujarat model. AAP is treading the same path by selling its Delhi model in Punjab. I want you not to be get misled, as both Gujarat and Delhi models exist only on papers and in advertisements. As BJP's Gujarat model has pushed the country into a big crisis," she said, claiming that "AAP makes big announcements about the development of Delhi, but ground realities are different."

KEJRIWAL 'PREDICTS' CHANNI'S DEFEAT IN 2 SEATS

Chandigarh: AAP chief Arvind Kejriwal on Sunday claimed that CM Charanjit Singh Channi will loss in both the seats from where he is contesting the Punjab polls. Kejriwal claimed that as per the surveys done by his party, the AAP was ahead in both the seats. In Chamkaur Sahib, Channi was liked by 35% people while 52% people chose AAP. On the other hand, in Bhadaur, the second constituency from where Channi is contesting, 48 per cent people liked the AAP candidate while Channi was liked by only 30 percent people. "Channi will remain only the chief ministerial face of the Congress. When he does not even become an MLA, how will he become the chief minister," Kejriwal asked.

ABG case linked to pre-2014 loans: SBI

EXPRESS NEWS SERVICE @ New Delhi

THE State Bank of India (SBI) in a statement issued on Sunday clarified that the ABG Shipyard, against which the bank had filed case of loan fraud, has been availing loan from the consortium of banks since 2001, and that ICICI Bank is the leader of the consortium.

The CBI has filed a case against ABG Shipyard and its promoters for committing fraud to the tune of over ₹22,000 crore.

"Due to poor performance, the account became NPA on November 30, 2013. Several efforts were made to revive the company operations but could not succeed," the country's largest lender said in a statement to necessarily imply that frauds committed by the shipping firm is not related to loans given to it recently.

The account was restructured under the CDR mechanism in March 2014 by all lenders, said SBI adding that as the shipping industry was going through a downturn, one of the worst ever seen, the operations of the company could not revive.

EXPRESS READ

Girl in hijab will be PM one day: Owaisi

LUCKNOW: A girl wearing hijab will become the PM of the country one day, AIMIM chief Asaduddin Owaisi said, amid the controversy over Muslim women's headscarves. "You all keep in mind, perhaps when I am not alive, a girl wearing a hijab will become the PM of this country one day," he said. "If a girl decides to wear hijab, who can stop her?"

'PM to blame for FIR delay in fraud case'

EXPRESS NEWS SERVICE @ New Delhi

THE Congress Sunday attacked Prime Minister Narendra Modi for the delay in registering FIR in connection with Gujarat-based ABG Shipyard allegedly duping 28 banks of more than ₹22,000 crore.

The party alleged that former chairman and MD of the firm Rishi Agarwal was always seen in Vibrant Gujarat summits and had travelled abroad with Modi during the latter's tenure as Gujarat CM.

"Rishi's case is even worse than Vijay Mallya's because his total debt is ₹22,843 crore for ABG Shipyard, ₹2,500 crore for ABG Cement (rechristened as Vadraj Cement) and ₹500 crore for ABG Energy," tweeted Congress general secretary and MP Shakti Sinh Gohil.

Gohil, who was MLA in Gujarat during Modi's regime in the state, said Agarwal was always seen in Vibrant Gujarat summits with Modi. "He was part of the delegation led by the then CM of the state, Narendra Modi, to South Korea in 2013. He is now accused of defrauding a consortium of SBI of over ₹22,842 crore."

ANTI-BULLY APP

13-yr-old school Anoushka Jolly's mobile app 'Kavach' which allows students, parents to report incidents of bullying anonymously has landed ₹50 lakh funding offer on a TV reality show

₹60 cr HEROIN SEIZED FROM ZIMBABWEAN AT MUMBAI AIRPORT

INDIA	Max	Min		Max	Min
Ahmedabad	30	17	Mumbai	31	22
Bhopal	29	15	Panaji	29	21
Jaipur	26	14	Patna	24	09
Amritsar	21	07	Lucknow	23	12
Chennai	31	23	Port Blair	30	25
Kolkata	27	14	Imphal	26	03
Srinagar	11	02	Chandigarh	25	11

Modernisation of police gets ₹26K cr booster

MHA announces umbrella scheme for new battalions, high-tech labs & investigation tools

EXPRESS NEWS SERVICE @ New Delhi

THE Central government on Sunday announced approval of an umbrella scheme for modernisation and improvement of police forces in states and Union Territories for five more years up to 2025-26, with a financial outlay of ₹26,275 crore.

The Ministry of Home Affairs (MHA) said the scheme includes security-related expenditure in Jammu and Kashmir, northeastern states and Maoists-affected areas, for raising new battalions, developing high-tech forensic laboratories and other investigation tools.

In an official statement, the MHA said, "The government under the leadership of PM Narendra Modi has approved the continuation of the umbrella scheme of Modernisation of Police Forces. The approval for the period from 2021-22 to 2025-26 moves forward the initiative of Home Minister Amit Shah to modernise and improve the functioning of police forces."

This scheme comprises all relevant sub-schemes that contribute to the modernisation and improvement. Also, provision has been made under the scheme for internal security, law and order and adoption of modern technology by police.

A sum of ₹50 crore will be used for narcotics control. Funds will be used for strengthening the criminal justice system by developing a robust forensic set-up, MHA said. A central outlay of ₹18,839 crore has been earmarked for security-related expenditure in J&K, insurgency affected Northeast and LWE areas.

As per MHA, ₹4,846 crore will be given for the modernisation of police forces. It stated that ₹2,080.50 crore will be given to develop operationally independent high-quality forensic sciences facilities for aiding scientific and timely probe.

The MHA said that since the implementation of the 'National Policy and Action Plan' for combating Maoists, Left extremism incidents have come down drastically. To pursue this accomplishment, six Left extremism related schemes with a Central outlay of ₹8,689 crore has been approved. These schemes include Special Central Assistance to affected districts and districts of concern to consolidate the gains.

For the raising of India Reserve Battalions or Specialised India Reserve Battalions, a central outlay of ₹350 crore was approved.

Is Vande Bharat train target too fast & furious?

RAJESH KUMAR THAKUR @ New Delhi

THE government of India announced in the budget that 400 semi high-speed Vande Bharat trains with new-generation technology and facilities will be functional in the next three years. However, it seems Indian Railways will not be able to manufacture such a huge number of Vande Bharat trains in the period mentioned.

Indian Railways does not have enough manufacturing capacity and many railway officials are struggling to explain how 400 such trains can be made. Speaking to this daily, many railway production experts, preferring anonymity, revealed that the Integral Coach Factory in Chennai does not have enough production capacity at present to meet the target of rolling out 400 Vande Bharat Trains in 36 months.

"Even if the government makes an all out effort to enhance production capacity on a war-footing, then also it will not be possible for Indian Railways to produce more than 100-120 Vande Bharat trains in a year," said a senior official.

A senior technical expert of Indian Railways who is engaged in the coach manufacturing unit, said: "Considering the present manufacturing capacity, Indian Railways will need at least five years to manufacture 400 new-generation Vande Bharat trains. It seems almost impossible to meet the target in next three years."

Sudhanshu Mani is the creator of Train-18, which is now called Vande Bharat. Also the former general manager of the Chennai-based Integral Coach Factory, he said it would take at least 5-6 years for Indian railways to manufacture 400 Vande Bharat trains. He said that 80% of spare and other equipment are imported and the remaining parts and spares are manufactured in the country for the Vande Bharat trains.

GUJARAT COAST PREFERRED ROUTE OF DRUG SMUGGLERS

DILIP SINGH KSHATRIYA @ Ahmedabad

IT has become clear that Gujarat has emerged as a major route for narcotics trafficking. Central and state agencies seized drugs worth ₹2,000 crore off the coast on Saturday.

This is not an isolated incident. From January 2021 to February 12, 2022, the value of drugs confiscated in Gujarat was ₹3,617 crore. The total volume was 68,984 kg, which amounts to an average daily seizure of 169 kg. Notably, this does not include the whopping ₹15,000 crore heroin haul from Mundra port in Kutch.

Police sources said marijuana worth ₹16.54 crore and weighing 63,400 kg was seized. Incidentally, marijuana or ganja is not smuggled into India, but locally cultivated. In terms of value, the biggest haul was of heroin. In all, 312 kg of heroin worth ₹3,562 crore was seized. Synthetic drugs consumed mostly by youngsters is also common. Police seized 3,622 kg of those worth ₹35.72 crore.

"The Gujarat coast has become a transit route for drugs smuggled into India. Earlier, these things were transported through Punjab. But these days, the drug mafia has changed the pattern. They are using the Gujarat route. From the recent seizure of drugs, it becomes evident that drug dealers land their consignments in Gujarat and then transport it to other states," a senior police official said.

The issue of drug smuggling into India through the Gujarat coastline was raised during a virtual meeting of the NCORD a few months back. Sources said every state has been directed to create an anti-narcotics task force with a 24x7 helpline.

When asked, top police officers said they are making efforts to curb this problem. "We have split the Special Operation Group (SOG) teams of every district into two. One team works exclusively on catching drug peddlers. Moreover, an officer of IG rank is heading the Anti-Narcotic Cell of CID crime and leading a dedicated team to catch drug mafia and peddlers in Gujarat," an officer said.

An official said that the state government is planning to enhance coastal security to prevent dealers from Pakistan from smuggling drugs into India. "We are working closely with the Coast Guard to thwart any attempt made by such elements," he said.

RJD state chief Jagada Nand Singh (centre) releases list of MLC candidates | PTI

Upper castes get focus in RJD's MLC poll list

RAMASHANKAR @ Patna

THE main opposition Rashtriya Janata Dal (RJD) on Sunday released a list of 21 candidates for the upcoming election to 24 vacant seats of the Bihar legislative council.

Nine candidates are Yadavs, five Bhumihars, four Rajputs while one each are Brahmin, Baniya and Muslim. No woman candidate figured in the list.

RJD chief Lalu Prasad finalised the list before leaving for Ranchi as he has to appear before a CBI court in connection with a fodder scam case on February 15.

RJD state chief Jagadanand Singh announced the names of the candidates in the presence of Leader of Opposition Tejashwi Yadav. Singh said while 20 candidates were from the RJD, one seat has been left for its ally Communist Party of India. The names of the remaining candidates would be announced later, he added.

Going by the list of candidates, the RJD played safe to not annoy the upper castes. Ten candidates are from this section which is considered to be vote-bank of the ruling NDA.

"Lalu finalised the list keeping the social engineering in mind. He has tried to give representation to all sections to substantiate the RJD's claim of being a party of all sections of the society," said political observer Pramod Kumar.

However, Hindustan Awami Morcha (HAM) chief Jitan Ram Manjhi took a swipe at the RJD for ignoring Dalits and women in the MLC polls. "There is neither any woman nor any Dalit candidate in the list. The party which claims to be a champion of the Dalit has completely ignored them. Moreover, even women have not been given representation," the former Bihar chief minister said.

TEARFUL ADIEU

A worker breaks down while paying tribute to industrialist Rahul Bajaj at the auto giant's facility at Akurdi on Sunday | PTI

EXPRESS READ

DefExpo to begin in Gandhinagar on Mar 13

Ahmedabad: Taking note of the declining Covid cases, the Gujarat government will organise DefExpo from March 10 to March 13 in Gandhinagar. PM Narendra Modi along with Defence Minister Rajnath Singh will inaugurate the function having the theme 'India-The Emerging Defence Manufacturing Hub'. The mega defence exhibition will focus on land, air, naval, internal homeland security, and electronic systems.

NEET: Petition seeks clarity on EWS criteria

New Delhi: NEET PG 2022 aspirants have approached the Supreme Court seeking clarity in the information bulletin for NEET PG 2022-23 regarding the applicability of EWS criteria. A two judge bench had upheld the constitutionality of 27% OBC reservation and had allowed the existing criteria to operate for the current admission year. However, future application of EWS criteria will be subject to final outcome of the petitions which were adjourned for March.

Militants free 2 workers abducted from Arunachal

Guwahati: Two construction workers from Assam and Bihar were freed by suspected militants of the Yung Aung faction of NSCN-K on Saturday night, 12 days after they were abducted from Longding district of Arunachal Pradesh. Longding District Magistrate B Lego told this newspaper Hiren Konch from Assam and Ramashis Mahato from Bihar were released on the India-Myanmar border. District Superintendent of Police Vikram Harimohan Meena said the two workers were visibly in good health and taken for a medical check up.

Wary oppn keeps candidates 'underground', TMC not worried

Barrackpore MP's relatives rejoin TMC

Three BJP leaders, who had withdrawn nominations for polls to the Garulia municipality, on Sunday made their way back to the Trinamool Congress. Voicing grievance over the saffron party's style of functioning, former MLA Sunil Singh, his son Aditya and Garulia Municipality's ex-chairperson Saurabh Singh joined the Trinamool. The three are relatives of BJP's Barrackpore MP Arjun Singh. They rejoined the TMC in the presence of Bengal minister Jyotipriyo Mallick and Naihati MLA Partha Bhowmik.

EXPRESS NEWS SERVICE @ Kolkata

THE withdrawal of nominations by opposition candidates for the upcoming municipal elections continued on Saturday, the last day of such exercise, with the opposition parties sending several of their candidates 'underground' to 'save' them from the ruling Trinamool Congress.

Sources said the withdrawal of candidature was highest in Birbhum among south Bengal districts. In Bolpur municipality, 10 wards out of 22 were announced uncontested on Saturday as all opposition nominations were withdrawn.

In Birbhum's Rampurhat, five wards went uncontested after all BJP nominees in 18 wards withdrew their papers. In 2015, the BJP had won in four wards in Rampurhat.

Opposition leaders at various municipalities in Birbhum said they sent their candidates underground. "It is to save our candidates from the atrocities of the TMC. There are several examples of intimidation which forced our candidates to withdraw nominations," said a BJP leader.

"The TMC followed the same practice in the 2018 panchayat polls in which the ruling party won 30 per cent of total seats uncontested. The Supreme Court had also expressed concern over the figure of huge number of uncontested seats. The people of Bengal gave a befitting reply in the Lok Sabha elections next year. The TMC will have to pay for its muscle flexing," said BJP state president Sukanta Majumdar.

Refuting the charges of intimidation, senior TMC leaders said the opposition was trying to hide its organisational weakness. "Candidates are withdrawing nominations on their own after realising people will not vote for them," claimed a TMC leader.

The TMC, too, is facing discontent within the party after many sitting councillors were not given tickets in the February 27 civic polls. As a large section of the dissidents decided to join the fray as Independents, the TMC warned them of strict action. "If anyone contests as an independent and wins, he will not be inducted in the party again. They will be expelled," said a TMC leader.

ART & CULTURE

India@75 theme added to Mumbai film festival

Prestigious event

The oldest and largest festival for non-feature films in South Asia, Mumbai International Film Festival attracts film makers from all over the world. Apart from competition and non-competition sections, interactive sessions like workshops, master classes, open forum and B2B sessions are major highlights of the festival.

NEW DELHI: The 17th edition of Mumbai International Film Festival (MIFF) for documentary, short fiction and animation films will be held from May 29 to June 4. Online registration to submit entries will start on Tuesday and continue March 15.

The film makers can log on to *www.miffin* or to *https://filmfreeway.com/MumbaiInternationalFilmFestival-MIFF* for entering films in different competition categories, said the ministry of information and broadcasting.

Films completed between September 1, 2019, and December 31, 2021, are eligible. The best documentary of the festival will receive a Golden Conch and ₹10 lakh in cash award.

"The winning films will receive cash awards, silver conches, trophies and certificates. As India is celebrating Azadi ka Amrit Mahotsav, the current edition has instituted a special award for the best short film on the theme India@75. The festival will also honour a veteran personality from the Indian non-feature film fraternity with the prestigious V Shantaram Lifetime Achievement Award," said a statement of the ministry. *ENS*

Vidyasagar Setu shut for six hours on Saturday

The Vidyasagar Setu, which runs across the Hooghly river, remained shut to traffic on February 12 for six hours from 8 am to 2 pm for structural assessment tests by the engineers of the Hooghly River Bridge Commissioners, officials said. Vehicles leading towards the bridge from Alipore was diverted from Turf View towards the Hastings intersection. Traffic was allowed to proceed down St George's Road as well as Strand Road. Motorists headed for Alipore or AJC Bose Road were diverted rightward from the Hastings intersection since all ramps leading to the bridge remained shut for the said six hours. Special police arrangements were in place to implement the diversions.

PRANAB MONDAL
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KOLKATA DIARY

Garden Reach's quarterly earnings go up

Garden Reach Shipbuilders & Engineers Limited (GRSE), one of the leading warship builders in the country have announced its financial results for the third quarter and nine months ended on December 31, 2021. In the 2022 financial year, the total income stood at `1,332.76 crore in nine months as against `878.66 crore in nine months of 2021 financial year. Revenues from operations for the nine months ended on December 31, 2021 stood at `1,212.90 crore as compared to `742.00 crore for the nine months ended on December 31, 2020, which is an Improvement of 63 per cent. The earnings before interest, tax, depreciation and amortization stood at `221.07 crore in the nine months as against `150.43 crore earned in the nine months of the previous year which is an Improvement of 47 per cent.

Green tribunal presses state to clean up canals

The National Green Tribunal has ordered the state government to clean up the Kestopur (in pic) and Bagjola canals and set a deadline linked to the project. The canals flow through the northern fringes of Kolkata and play a key role in draining out effluents and rainwater. Cases on the canals were last heard on February 8. The zonal bench of the tribunal comprising Justice Amit B Sthalekar and expert member Saibal Dasgupta has asked the state chief secretary to look into the matter personally. The bench made the statement when it was pointed out that a number of proposals related to the dredging of canals were awaiting the finance department's clearance.

Pay token ₹1.5k and forgo fitness test pending fines

Owners of all commercial vehicles in the state can now pay a one-time fine of `1,500 and not pay any pending fines for failing to undertake fitness test on time. One this is done, they can appear for the fitness test afresh, thereby waiving any big amount in fines amassed. State Transport Minister Firhad Hakim announced the changes. In the existing system, a fitness test costs `850 and failure to appear for it within a stipulated period invites a penalty of `50 a day. A year's penalty amounts to `18,250. Besides, bus and minibus owners also have faltered on fitness test, who say the steep penalty had been deterring them from getting the fitness test done.

97
people were arrested by Paris police for defying a ban on a Canada-style protest convoy over Covid curbs

GLOBAL WEATHER
LR: Light Rain • HR: Heavy Rain • SW: Snow • TDS: Thundershower • LC: Light Cloud • SNY: Sunny

Beijing	0	-12	SNY	Los Angeles	26	12	SNY
Colombo	31	23	TDS	Melbourne	33	17	LC
Dhaka	26	14	SNY	Moscow	0	-4	LC
Dubai	24	18	LC	New York	-1	-7	SNY
Houston	21	6	SNY	Singapore	31	26	TDS
Istanbul	8	2	LC	Toronto	-8	-9	SNY
London	9	3	LC	Washington	1	-8	LC

Flights to Ukraine halted, redirected as crisis brews

Kyiv says it has not closed airspace, cites 'fluctuating market' issues

An instructor shows a woman how to use a Kalashnikov assault rifle, as members of a Ukrainian far-right group train, in Kyiv on Sunday | AP

Dutch airline KLM has cancelled flights to Ukraine until further notice, the company said on Saturday. Dutch sensitivity to potential danger in Ukrainian airspace is high in the wake of the 2014 shooting down of a Malaysian airliner over an area of eastern Ukraine held by Russia-backed rebels. All 298 people aboard died, including 198 Dutch citizens.

The Ukrainian charter airline SkyUp said Sunday that its flight from Madeira, Portugal, to Kyiv was diverted to the Moldovan capital Chisinau after the plane's Irish lessor said it was banning flights in Ukrainian airspace.

Ukrainian presidential spokesman Serhii Nykyforov said that Ukraine has not closed its airspace. A statement from the Infrastructure Ministry said: "Some carriers are experiencing difficulties associated with fluctuations in the insurance markets."

"President Biden was clear with President Putin that while the United States remains prepared to engage in diplomacy, in full coordination with our Allies and partners, we are equally prepared for other scenarios," the White House statement said.

Yuri Ushakov, Putin's top foreign policy aide, said that while tensions have been escalating, in recent days "the situation has simply been brought to the point of absurdity". He said Biden mentioned the possible sanctions that could be imposed on Russia, but "this issue was not the focus during a fairly long conversation with the Russian leader". *AP*

MOSCOW

SOME airlines have cancelled or diverted flights to Ukraine amid heightened fears that an invasion by Russia is imminent despite intensive weekend talks between the Kremlin and the West.

In an hourlong Saturday call with Russian President Vladimir Putin, President Joe Biden said invading Ukraine would cause 'widespread human suffering' and that the West was committed to diplomacy to end the crisis but 'equally prepared for other scenarios', the White House said. It offered no suggestion that the call diminished the threat of an imminent war in Europe.

The two presidents spoke a day after Biden's national security adviser, Jake Sullivan, warned that US intelligence shows a Russian invasion could begin within days.

GERMANY TAKES TOUGHER LINE

Berlin: Germany's president on Sunday said "responsibility" for the risk of "war" in Ukraine lay with Russia, bringing greater clarity to Berlin's position on the crisis which has been criticised as too lenient towards Moscow. Chancellor Olaf Scholz added on the eve of a trip to Kyiv and Moscow that Western allies would respond "immediately" with sanctions in the event of a Russian invasion. The continent was confronted with the "danger of a military conflict, of war in eastern Europe — and Russia carries the responsibility for that," Frank-Walter Steinmeier said after being re-elected for a second five-year term. AFP

ASIA MATTERS

INDONESIA

High waves kill 11 during beach ritual

Jakarta: Eleven people drowned after being dragged by big waves on a beach in Indonesia's East Java province despite warnings to avoid the sea, officials said on Sunday. They were part of a group of 24 people from several villages who took part in a local ritual that involves swimming in the ocean on Saturday night, officials from the rescue agency said. A two-year-old girl was among the 13 survivors at the Payangan beach in Jember district, the officials said. They were being treated at a health clinic. "A local resident warned them not to go into the sea because of big waves but they ignored it," said chief rescuer I Wayan Suyatna. He said that 23 of them were dragged by a sudden wave. The last victim was recovered on Sunday afternoon. Indonesia's weather agency has warned of extreme weather and high waves in several regions. *AP*

THAILAND

Metal band Defying Decay rocks against royal insult law

Bangkok: Thai band Defying Decay's single The Law 112: Secrecy and Renegades is a defiant anthem with a taboo-defying message — challenging Thailand's draconian lese majeste laws. Criticising the royal family is punishable by up to 15 years in jail, but calls for royal reform — once off-limits — spilled into the open during a series of major youth-led street protests against the junta in 2020. The 112 of the title refers to Thailand's criminal code, but the song's lyrics avoid criticising anyone by name. *AFP*

NEPAL

Chief Justice Rana faces impeachment motion

Kathmandu: Nepal's ruling coalition lawmakers on Sunday filed an impeachment motion against Chief Justice Cholendra Shamsher JB Rana over allegations of corruption. Spokesperson of the Parliament Secretariat Rajnath Pandey said that the impeachment was registered at 11am. Rana, who had assumed the post of Chief Justice on January 2, 2019, has been suspended from his post following the registration of the motion against him. A total of 98 lawmakers from ruling alliance including Law and Justice Minister Dilendra Prasad Badu have signed the proposal to impeach the chief justice. There is a provision for automatic suspension of the chief justice with the registration of the impeachment motion. There are 21 charges levelled against the chief justice in the motion. *PTI*

Swiss vote to ban tobacco advertising

GENEVA

THE Swiss voted on Sunday to tighten their notoriously lax tobacco laws by banning virtually all advertising of the products, partial results showed. Nearly 56% of voters and 15 of Switzerland's 26 cantons backed the near-total tobacco advertising ban, according to official results after all ballots had been tallied in 22 cantons.

"We are extremely happy," Stefanie De Borba of the Swiss League against Cancer, said as the results became clear. "The people have understood that health is more important than economic interests."

Switzerland lags far behind most wealthy nations in restricting tobacco advertising – a situation widely blamed on hefty lobbying by some of the world's biggest tobacco companies headquartered in the country.

Currently, most tobacco advertising is legal at a national level, except for ads on television and radio, and ones that specifically target minors.

Meanwhile, Swiss voters were not convinced by a number of other issues on the ballot Sunday as part of the country's direct democratic system. Partial results showed they had flatly rejected a bid for a blanket ban on all animal testing, with nearly 80% opposed.

All political parties, parliament and the government had opposed the initiative, arguing it went too far and would have dire consequences for medical research. *AFP*

Kais Saied, President of Tunisia

Tunisia's prez extends powers over judiciary

TUNIS

THOUSANDS of Tunisians protested on Sunday after President Kais Saied gave himself sweeping powers over the judiciary, his latest step in what opponents say is a slide towards autocracy.

A decree published in the early hours officially replaced a judicial watchdog he had vowed to dissolve, and gave him powers to block judicial appointments, sack judges and ban them from going on strike.

Hours later, more than 2,000 protesters gathered in central Tunis, many waving large Tunisian flags and chanting slogans against the president. "The people want what you don't want," went one chant, echoing a slogan of the country's revolt against the regime of dictator Zine El Abidine Ben Ali over a decade ago: "The people want the regime to fall." Some protesters carried signs reading "save our democracy!" and "don't touch the judiciary!"

Saied's decree came a week after he said he would dissolve the High Judicial Council, prompting a nationwide strike by judges saying the move would infringe on their independence. *AFP*

Killed for witchcraft, Scotland's forgotten victims find a voice

DUNDEE

CLAIRE MITCHELL and Zoe Venditozzi are fighting for pardons for all those executed for witchcraft in Scotland, the vast majority of whom were women, and for a memorial to those forgotten by history.

"Between the 16th and 18th century in Scotland, approximately 4,000 people were accused of witchcraft," explained Mitchell, a lawyer who founded the campaign group Witches of Scotland. In total, more than 2,500 people were executed for witchcraft in Scotland, four-fifths of them women. They were mostly strangled and then burned, after making confessions extracted under torture.

"People would take turns interviewing them, keep them awake for days and days and days, and ask them about witchcraft," Mitchell said at a graveyard in the city of Dundee. The victims were forced to confess that "they were dancing with the devil, having sex with the devil", she added. "And those confessions were used by the courts in Scotland... to prosecute these women."

They are recognised in the windblown 16th-century cemetery by a small column nicknamed the "Witches' Stone".

Passers-by often leave flower petals and coins as a tribute to those executed who include Grissel Jaffray, strangled and burnt in 1669.

'The Witches Well' on the esplanade of Edinburgh Castle in Scotland | AFP

In a city centre street, a mosaic depicting a cone of flames commemorates Jaffray, the woman known as "the last witch of Dundee".

Mitchell founded Witches of Scotland on March 8, 2020 — International Women's Rights Day — after discovering the harrowing consequences of the Witchcraft Act. This 1563 law approved capital punishment for those guilty of witchcraft and was in force until 1736.

Witch hunts were promoted by Scotland's King James VI, who became also king James I of England in 1603. His obsession found voice in William Shakespeare's "Scottish play", featuring three witches who lead Macbeth to his doom.

Mitchell's association is calling for three things: a pardon for all those convicted of witchcraft, an official apology from the authorities, and a national monument to remember the victims.

Natalie Don, an MP with the Scottish National Party that holds power in Edinburgh, intends to introduce a bill in the Scottish Parliament to obtain a pardon for all those convicted. "In several countries across the world people are still accused and punished for practising witchcraft. Scotland should lead the way in acknowledging the horrors of our past and ensure these people do not go down in history as criminals," she said. *AFP*

Lynch mob stones mentally ill man to death in Pakistan

Relatives and locals carry a coffin containing the body of the man, who was lynched by a mob, for his funeral at Khanewal on Sunday | AFP

ISLAMABAD

A MOB stoned to death a mentally ill man in Pakistan, authorities said on Sunday, in the country's latest case of blasphemy-related violence.

Dozens of people have been arrested over the lynching, which happened on Saturday evening in a remote village in Punjab province, after it was alleged that the victim had burned some pages of the Koran, according to Tahir Ashrafi, the prime minister's special representative on religious harmony. Law-enforcement agencies are also monitoring hundreds of other suspects, he said.

> The (victim's) family says he is mentally ill. This is not the religion of my Prophet, to kill people under your own interpretation of religion
>
> Tahir Ashrafi, Pak PM's special representative

The killing came just over two months after a Sri Lankan factory manager was beaten to death and set ablaze by a mob over blasphemy in Sialkot city, also in Punjab.

"Who could possibly justify the barbaric act of stoning to death a mentally ill person?" Ashrafi told a televised press conference in Khanewal district, where the lynching happened. "The man's family says that he was mentally ill and his mental health wasn't right for the past 10 to 15 years."

"This is not the religion of my Prophet," he added.

On Twitter, Prime Minister Imran Khan said his government had "zero tolerance for anyone taking the law into their own hands", adding that "mob lynchings will be dealt with full severity of the law". He said he had asked Punjab officials for a "report on action taken against perpetrators of the lynching... & against the police who failed in their duty".

Few issues are as galvanising in Pakistan as blasphemy, and even the slightest suggestion of an insult to Islam can supercharge protests and incite lynchings.

Rights groups say accusations of blasphemy can often be wielded to settle personal vendettas, with minorities largely the target. In April 2017, an angry mob killed university student Mashal Khan when he was accused of posting blasphemous content online. And a Christian couple were lynched then burned in a kiln in Punjab in 2014, after being falsely accused of desecrating the Koran. *AFP*

Black, gay priest challenges Church's ideals

NEW YORK

REV. **Bryan Massingale** of St Charles Borromeo Catholic Church in Harlem pursues his ministry in ways that echo two Martin Luthers — Baptist minister Martin Luther King Jr, and the rebellious 16th century German priest excommunicated from the Catholic Church the former was named after.

Like King, Massingale decries the scourge of racial inequality in the United States. Like the German Martin Luther, Massingale is often at odds with official Catholic teaching — he supports the ordination of women and making celibacy optional for Catholic clergy.

Besides, as a gay man, he vocally disagrees with the church's doctrine on same-sex relations, instead advocating for full inclusion. The Vatican holds that gay and lesbian persons should be treated with dignity and respect, but that gay sex is 'intrinsically disordered' and sinful. *AFP*

ILLICIT TO POPULAR

A sea of red in Saudi shops, but don't mention 'Valentine's Day'

RIYADH

RED clothing and underwear are displayed in Saudi shopfronts, but the increasingly popular Valentine's Day promotions are missing one thing: the festival's name. While sales surge and Valentine's gifts become more common among the youthful Saudi population, the word "Valentine's" is nowhere to be seen.

"Management has asked us to decorate the window display with red lingerie... but without mentioning anywhere Valentine's Day," said one salesperson at a Riyadh mall.

The displays represent change in Saudi Arabia, where stick-toting religious police once cracked down on sales of Valentine's Day paraphernalia and even on people wearing red on February 14.

Valentine's Day has vague origins dating back to Roman times, when several Christian martyrs were named Valentine. The celebration for lovers, marked widely around the world, was firmly off-limits in the ultraconservative kingdom which would only mark Muslim holidays and its September national day.

But Saudi Arabia has been undergoing social change as it attempts to present a more appealing image and diversify its oil-dependent economy. It has curbed the feared religious police and given women more freedoms. Among these, they now have the right to drive, and can add colour to their dress beyond the traditional plain black abaya robe. These changes, however, have come alongside a crackdown on dissent which has seen clerics and women's rights activists detained.

Not everyone is comfortable with the underwear being on show, finding it a jarring sight after decades when such items were kept strictly behind closed doors.

"I don't want to see these things," said one woman, fully veiled in black except for her eyes. "They bother me, but there are people who like it and this is their freedom of choice."

Times are changing, though, and many in Saudi Arabia — where more than half the population is under the age of 35 — are embracing Valentine's Day, whether they call it that or not.

"People did not celebrate Valentine's Day, but now many Saudis do," said Khuloud, 36, a Saudi saleswoman who did not want to give her last name. "There is a huge demand on clothes during this time, and customers are often asking for the colour red and profits have also been huge." *AFP*

Women walk past Valentine's Day-special advertisements in Panorama mall in Riyadh. None of the ads, however, mention the name of the festival | AFP

US, Japan, South Korea leaders meet in Hawaii

HONOLULU

UNITED STATES Secretary of State Antony Blinken met his Japanese and South Korean counterparts Saturday in Hawaii to discuss the threat posed by nuclear-armed North Korea after Pyongyang began the year with a series of missile tests.

Blinken said at a news conference after the meeting that North Korea was "in a phase of provocation" and the three countries condemned the recent missile launches. "We are absolutely united in our approach, in our determination," Blinken said after his talks with Japanese Foreign Minister Yoshimasa Hayashi and South Korean Foreign Minister Chung Eui-yong. He said the countries were "very closely consulting" on further steps they may take in response to North Korea, but didn't offer specifics.

The three released a joint statement calling on North Korea to engage in dialogue and cease its 'unlawful activities'. They said they had no hostile intent toward North Korea and were open to meeting Pyongyang without preconditions. *AP*

HOW GLOBAL EVENTS INFLUENCE YOUR MONEY

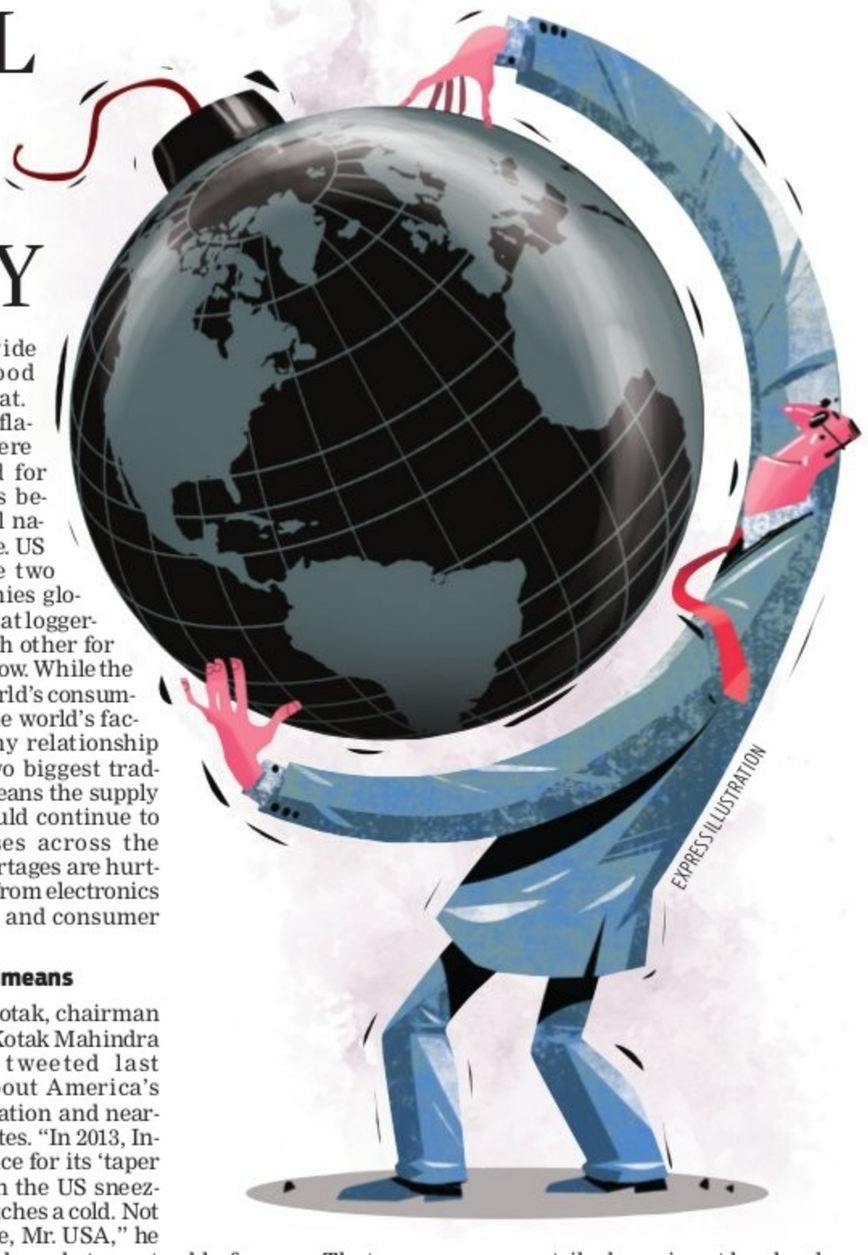
RAJAS KELKAR

IN an interconnected world, scarcity or surplus travel swiftly. Your money cannot escape troubles when other parts of the world are hit by inflation or recession. The consumer price inflation in America, the world's largest economy, rose to the highest level since 1982 in January 2022. The trouble is not with the inflation so much. The US interest rates are at record lows despite soaring consumer prices. America has yet to begin raising interest rates.

The easy money credit policy of the US Federal Reserve to tackle any financial crisis has now served the purpose and needs to be wound up. The US 10-year bond yield is at the highest level in two years. That is an indicator. If the US consumer prices do not cool off, that may force the US Federal Reserve to take steps swiftly. While the US Federal Reserve has warned of at least four rate hikes in 2022 and another four in 2023, many market pundits believe there could be more. If US interest rates rise sharply, it could put the world economy in a tizzy. As the money supply gets tightened in America to fight inflation, institutional investors are likely to pull out of risky assets worldwide. That happened in 2013 and hurt Indian stock markets badly.

The other trouble is that oil prices show no signs of cooling off. With the geopolitical tensions simmering on the Russia-Ukraine border, they are unlikely to do so soon. The tension between the two countries has already caused global food grain prices to rise. Russia and Ukraine play a significant role in the worldwide market for food grains like wheat.

For global inflation to ease, there is also a need for trade relations between powerful nations to improve. US and China, the two biggest economies globally, have been at loggerheads with each other for many months now. While the US leads the world's consumers, China is the world's factory. The stormy relationship between the two biggest trading partners means the supply side shocks could continue to hurt businesses across the globe. Chip shortages are hurting businesses from electronics to automobiles and consumer durables.



What it means

Uday Kotak, chairman of the Kotak Mahindra Bank, tweeted last week about America's rising inflation and near-zero interest rates. "In 2013, India paid the price for its 'taper tantrum'. When the US sneezes, the world catches a cold. Not this time, please, Mr. USA," he said. Indian stock markets went into a tailspin when the US began to tighten the monetary policy in 2013.

Last Friday, RBI governor Shaktikanta Das called emerging economies like India vulnerable to de-stabilising global spillovers. However, he promised to insulate the economy from such shocks. The RBI MPC left key borrowing rates in India unchanged. The committee expects inflation pressures to cool off in domestic food prices but continues to be concerned about rising energy prices-India imports over 80% of the energy needs.

Interest rates in India are stable for now. That means your savings accounts would continue to give you a lower return than the inflation rate. At the same time, stock markets are likely to remain volatile. Foreign portfolio investors have pulled out over $6 billion in 2022 from Indian equities so far. They could pull out more money as they own over $600 worth of Indian equities. Indian mutual funds continue to see flows from retail investors in India. The presence of local institutional investors negates the impact of a foreign investor sell-off. If share prices fall sharply, mutual funds and insurance companies in India usually strike bargains at low levels.

You need to ensure that you do not panic when share prices fall. You must continue to stay invested in equity assets and keep some cash to buy more whenever they fall sharply. Companies do not stop doing business because foreign investors sell for a month or two. Most analysts expect Indian companies to report better profit growth over the next two years. Foreigners would sell Indian equities for reasons other than the profits of Indian companies. That could be an opportunity more than a threat.

(The author is editor-in-chief at www.moneyminute.in)

Understanding the new crypto tax regulations

Budget announced a 30% tax on income from virtual digital asset

UMA KANNAN @Bengaluru

WHEN Finance Minister Nirmala Sitharaman announced in the Union Budget a 30% tax on any income from virtual digital asset and also a 1% TDS (Tax Deducted at Source) on all crypto transactions, the crypto industry took a sigh of relief as the announcement necessarily settled the legality question bothering the crypto ecosystem.

But as people started to interpret the pros and cons of the move, they began to look at the multiple challenges as the crypto tax kicks in.

HOW CRYPTO TAX DIFFERS FROM TAX ON OTHER ASSETS

Asset	LTCG tax rate	STCG tax rate
Crypto assets	30% without indexation benefit	30% without indexation benefit
Equity	10% if LTCG is more than 1 lakh	15%
Debt	20% after indexation	Taxed according to tax slab
Gold	20% after indexation	Taxed according to tax slab
Real estate	20% after indexation	Taxed according to tax slab

Note: LTCG: Long-term capital gains; STCG: Short-term capital Gains

Indexation is adjusting the purchase price with inflation to arrive at effective capital gains

Unanswered questions

More than the 30% tax on capital gains from crypto trading, it is the 1% Tax Deducted at Source (TDS) that is giving sleepless nights to investors, traders and exchanges alike.

The question that is bothering the exchanges most is if the 1% TDS will affect the volumes, as it will be deducted on every payment made for transfer of a virtual digital asset.

The government needs to provide more clarity, says Archit Gupta, Founder and CEO, Clear, a fintech company providing tax solutions.

"TDS compliance will be onerous for buyers to undertake; taxpayers may have hundreds of thousands of items/trades. Also, usually TDS deduction requires that taxpayers deposit TDS to the government and submit a statement of details. Usually, there are penalties for TDS non-compliance. The government has to lay down the TDS compliance process for cryptos, including relevant forms," he adds.

Clear also has plans to tie-up with crypto exchanges to help customers adhere to the new tax norms. At present, it has 50,000 income tax filers reporting crypto income.

On the present way of calculating crypto tax, Archit Gupta said in the absence of specific guidance, tax had to be estimated and paid for a customer. Based on the volume and frequency of trade of a customer, their income from crypto could be classified as business income or as capital gains. Based on the latest guidelines proposed, crypto income can be calculated by reducing the cost of acquisition from the consideration received.

Many crypto exchanges have been saying that this tax will affect intra-day traders. Sumit Gupta, Co-Founder and CEO, CoinDCX, says that the 1% withholding on the entire transaction value will make day trading, arbitrage trading, margin trading etc. unfeasible, which may significantly impact order-books and volume on crypto-exchanges; making the markets illiquid and inefficient.

India already trades at a premium of 5-7% on global crypto prices. This step will drive an increase in that premium further. Compliance issues to manage the TDS deductions for millions of users on the platform is an operational nightmare. A reasonable cut-off for the amount should be set at ₹2,50,000 for TDS deductions, he adds. Crypto unicorn CoinDCX, which recently added over 1 crore users, says the timeline to implement these far-reaching changes is too short and unviable.

> **The 1% withholding on the entire transaction value will make day trading, arbitrage trading, margin trading etc. unfeasible, which may significantly impact order-books...**
>
> Sumit Gupta, CEO CoinDCX

Darshan Bathija, CEO and Co-Founder of Vauld too says that the tax is not friendly to web developers since their income is to be treated as a gift.

"A 1% TDS needs to come down to be in line with the equities market, to encourage a healthy growth of the industry. This way liquidity and trading volume does not disappear overnight. As a long-term investor, paying TDS would not pose a problem. But this could also be detrimental to day traders dealing with multiple transactions daily," he adds.

Intra-day trading is popular in the crypto space. About 50% of Giottus' user base engages in it. "However, many of the traders don't necessarily end up with profits. We advise investors to buy and hold crypto assets for longer terms to ensure profitability and to ensure capital is not locked as TDS," says Vikram Subburaj, CEO, Giottus Crypto Exchange.

With crypto holdings of ₹40,000 crore, India has over 20 million crypto investors, and according to various exchanges, an investor on an average invests anywhere between ₹10,000- ₹50,000 in cryptocurrency.

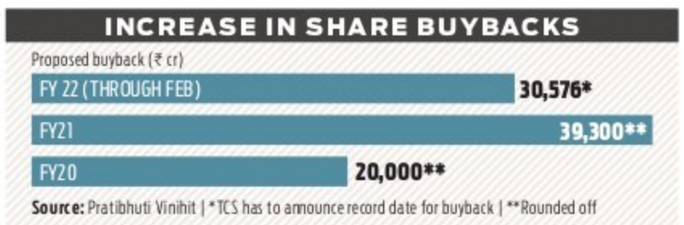
Steep tax rates

The 1% TDS does create compliance burden and is a big deterrence to frequent trading, but the 30% tax itself is very steep. The tax is punitive in nature if you compare it with the tax on other asset classes.

The government has likened the 1% TDS on crypto transactions to Securities transaction tax (STT) on equities. But the government levies a 0.1% STT on each equity sale or purchase transactions on exchanges. "The 30% tax on the profits and not being able to offset their losses makes people think thrice before they think about investing in Crypto. This is very steep for the low income or middle-income Crypto traders," says Bhagaban Behera, CEO and Co-Founder of Defy.

INCREASE IN SHARE BUYBACKS

Proposed buyback (₹ cr)



Source: Pratibhuti Vinihit | *TCS has to announce record date for buyback | **Rounded off

WHAT IS A SHARE BUYBACK?
A corporate action involving a co repurchasing shares from its shareholders.

WHY DO A BUYBACK?
To reward shareholders with surplus cash co is sitting on

To reduce the outstanding shares & increase the earnings per share

HOW ARE THE SHARES REPURCHASED?
Through the tender route or the open market route on the stock exchange

India Inc offers to buy back shares worth ₹30,576 cr this year

RAM SAHGAL @Mumbai

LISTED companies have offered to buy back shares worth ₹30,576.37 crore in the fiscal year so far (FY22), which stacks up reasonably well with the preceding years' figures since the buyback tax was extended from unlisted to listed companies in FY20.

"Buybacks are turning out to be a good means for companies sitting on surplus cash to reward their shareholders besides increasing their financial ratios or the promoter holding," said Sunil Pachisia , head of institutional sales at Pratibhuti Vinihit. "Buyback tax is chargeable to the company distributing the cash and not the shareholder, making it attractive for shareholders to tender."

As per Pachisia , FY22's buybacks proposed at ₹30,576.37 crore so far, while lower than the preceding fiscal year's ₹39,300 crore exceed the ₹20,000 crore companies offered to buy back in FY20.

Of the buybacks proposed this fiscal year, tech giant TCS's tender offer itself accounts for almost three-fifths of the total amount proposed to be repurchased from shareholders. The company has fixed the record date at February 23 to determine those eligible for the buyback.

Tech No 2 player Infosys' offer size of ₹9,200 crore through the stock exchange under the open market route accounts for 30% of the total buyback proposed for FY22. Together the two tech giants account for 89% of the total buybacks being done by companies this fiscal, said Pachisia.

Other offers include MOIL's ₹693.77 crore buyback, Ajanta Pharma's ₹285.6 crore repurchase, sugar producer Balrampur Chini's ₹215.25 crore buyback and NIIT's ₹237 crore offer. Emami has also announced it would buyback shares worth ₹162 crore from the open market this month.

One of the reasons for the increase in buybacks since FY20 is that a listed company pays buyback tax of 20% on the difference between the market price and issue price (distributed income) while the shareholder bears no tax liability under the tender route, said financial consultant Amol Joshi.

When distributing dividends, on the other hand, companies are exempt, while the shareholders pay income tax on the same.

TODAY'S STOCK PICK

HINDALCO
Current Price ₹540.50
Target Price ₹638

HNDL has received bids for supply of power from renewable sources for up to 85% of its requirement. Given its positive outlook on aluminum for the next five years, it is contemplating a brownfield aluminum smelter. We are constructive on the aluminum market in the short run.

— Motilal Oswal Securities Limited

Disclaimer: The views and recommendations made above are that of the individual analyst or broking company, and not that of *The New Indian Express*.

MONEY-WISE

BUILD PORTFOLIO BY KEEPING NOISE OUT

FINANCIAL ADVICE

PV SUBRAMANYAM
writes at www.subramoney.com and has authored the best seller 'Retire Rich - Invest ₹ 40 a day'

TO build a good portfolio and a good life, one very important thing to do in life is to make sure that you keep the NOISE out of your life.

Remember there were so many people who were tweeting the state-wise and country-wise data of Covid? The number of people impacted, admitted, dead, etc. just a few months ago? Go and scratch your memory, and the probability of you remembering the numbers is close to zero.

Anything which you put into your head and do not use it beyond 30 seconds is NOISE. You really do not need it.

Now go and try to remember what an expert said about the Equity market last week, or last month. Good chance that you will not be able to remember what that 'expert' said.

Some of my best times were the ones that I spent in Ladakh, Spiti valley, and some other parts that had no connectivity. I used to have FOMO about what was happening in the world - especially in the equity markets. I realised that the world (and markets) were happily getting by without me, and my portfolio too was getting along fine without me doing anything.

Now I realised that in a day we hear far more noise than useful information! Reading about rapes, murders, corruption actually makes it worse - I have no clue how we will be better off reading about such negative news about the depraved people in society. Similarly, in your portfolio too, knowing "when interest rates go up, bond prices will go down" or "when interest rates go up equity prices could go down" is knowledge, but to use it, you need to know when interest rates will go up (or go down). As long as you do not know which way interest rates are going to move, how will you use this 'knowledge' beats me.

No expert predicted the Banking crisis. Noise does not really help - which means keeping it out can be very helpful.

You will be calmer, and you would have saved a lot of heart burn, saved time reading and worrying or tweeting about such 'events' and not had even missed one bit of useful information. This calmness allows you to do a lot of other things - like learning Veda/Geeta chanting, writing, doing Yoga .the list is endless and all this help you in calming down. A calm mind can handle most of life's problems better - far better - than a mind agitated by events which you do not remember after 24 hours!

I keep noise out by unsubscribing from most Social media channels - and sticking just to my area of work. For my YouTube videos I need to be on Social media - but one can do that easily while keeping away the noise that they do not need. Try staying away from Noise for 15 days and see if you can detoxify. Reading good books without any interruption is a skill many of us seem to have lost. Let us try and get it back.

EXPRESS READ

MF Houses Collected ₹1 L cr Through NFOs

New Delhi: Mutual fund houses launched 140 new fund offerings (NFOs), which collected about `1 lakh crore in 2021 on a sharp rally in the markets and an exceptional increase in the retail investors' interest. The current volatility in the market might prompt asset management companies to limit the launch of NFOs this year, said MyWealthGrowth.com co-founder Harshad Chetanwala.

EPFO to take call on interest rate in March

New Delhi: EPFO's apex decision-making body Central Board of Trustee will take a call on interest rate on employees' provident fund deposits for 2021-22 in its meeting next month. "EPFO CBT meeting will be held in Guwahati in March where proposal for interest rate for 2021-22 would be listed as it is end of the fiscal year," Union Labour Minister Bhupender Yadav told PTI.

'Sharp rise in Covid-19 claims have hit the insurance industry'

ENS ECONOMIC BUREAU
@ New Delhi

HEALTH insurance companies have received a total of 28 lakh Covid claims worth ₹35,681 crore in the past two years.

In an interaction with TNIE, Prasun Sikdar, MD and CEO at ManipalCigna Health Insurance, said that Covid related insurance claims have almost doubled compared to the non-Covid claims, and the sharp rise in Covid claims has hit the insurers substantially.

However, he says that insurance firms have processed claims in a timely manner since the onset of the pandemic so that customers could access the quality healthcare they needed.

"At ManipalCigna, we have paid claims worth ₹850 crore + in the last two years with 85% settlement ratio. For only Covid, this is 24,000 paid claims worth ₹243 Crore, with the settlement ratio of 90%," he says.

Sikdar says over the last couple of years, the Health insurance sector has emerged as the fastest growing non-life insurance segment. "We believe that health sector will continue to grow in the times to come as this is driven by increased awareness and demand, rising affluence in India, and the higher prevalence of diseases," says Sikdar when asked how the pandemic has changed the insurance industry.

He says the pandemic has also led to digital acceleration and adoption. "Social distancing has now made customers adapt to online purchase and online service," he added.

On whether the pandemic would lead to higher health insurance cost, Sikdar says that Covid-19 has brought about multitude of changes in the treatment protocols which in turn have also impacted the costs. He, however, says that if these changes are going to be permanent, then these factors could also impact the premiums in the long run.

HIGHER HEALTH INSURANCE COST

Covid-19 has brought about multitude of changes in the treatment protocols which in turn have also impacted the costs. He, however, says that if these changes are going to be permanent, then these factors could also impact the premiums in the long run

England's Livingstone gets highest bid on Day 2 from Punjab; Archer and Singapore's Tim David too strike big as Mumbai Indians snap duo for ₹16.2 crore

With 10 teams in fray and demand on higher side, franchises struggle to find the right balance as several teams have multiple holes to fill in the XI

NEW BALANCE

VENKATA KRISHNA B @Chennai

AS the hammer went down one final time in Bengaluru on Sunday, there was a round of applause among the franchises. After two hectic days, which saw plenty of stressful faces across the auction room, there isn't a single team that would say they are fully satisfied with their picks. From the franchises' point of view, there is simply no perfect auction, because beyond a point, the affordability of a player is not in their total control. Instead, what they attempt is to at least get their second or even third choice player, and ensure there are no holes.

Over the weekend, 10 teams had arrived in Bengaluru, having done their homework, and permutations only to see those sitting in the other nine tables outsmart them with a different approach and outlook. The question ahead of this player auction was how the teams with two more new entrants in Lucknow Super Giants and Gujarat Titans will manage to put together a balanced squad. The balance is a key thing in the IPL. It is what most teams struggle to crack, especially when it comes to their overseas picks and the Indian players. The USP of the IPL, especially over the last four-five seasons, has been its unpredictability and its nature of the event going down to the wire. The gap among the teams has only been getting narrower and narrower.

Bigwigs from some of the franchises during the second day of the IPL auctions at the ITC Gardenia hotel in Bengaluru, on Sunday | SPORTZPICS

Holes to fill

So at the end of two days, what we have now is the sort of squad imbalance many franchises feared would be the case prior to the auction. Mumbai Indians and Chennai Super Kings, two teams who usually have a plan in mind and hardly deviate from it, continued with it. The nine titles they share between them is a testament to their policy of sticking to their philosophy. They tried to stick it as much as possible this time too, but they would be far from happy as they have holes to fill. To cut the story short, they have at least a couple of weak links which will be hard to ignore when it comes down to the final XI. Mumbai, even dared to do something totally brave, by going for Jofra Archer who won't be available for this season. That they went as high as ₹8 crore said, they were not just looking at the coming season, but one after that. Similarly, they spent ₹8.2 crore on Tim David, a T20 freelancer from Singapore, whose reputation is only on the ascendance.

Almost there

These two giants aside, the rest, too, showed how far they have travelled in terms of acing the auction. Delhi Capitals, Punjab Kings, Rajasthan Royals have managed to get the sort of balance they hoped for. Punjab and Delhi, especially have a good mix of aggressive batters and able bowlers with which they can definitely dream of a playoff berth. "There is absolutely more demand than supply, but I guess there were challenges because there were 10 teams and it was different. I have been in couple of big mega auctions in 2011, 2014 and smaller auctions before this auction. This one has been really, really different and more challenging because every player, that whoever is going for, is going for a large sum of money, so the purse is dwindling no matter what value you have in your purse. The auction dynamics are very very different and you have to be nimble and that is something we realised in the last one and half days. You have to be even more nimble during this auction then the previous ones," Punjab head coach and director of operations, Anil Kumble said.

Issues remain

Sunrisers Hyderabad, who like Punjab preferred a new-look side, have addressed their middle-order issues and have a strong base in place. As has been the case, they are slightly loaded in favour of bowlers, but again, it is a philosophy they have stuck to all the while. Royal Challengers Bangalore, too, have a squad which they will be happy with, but like Mumbai and Chennai have holes they have to manage with. Kolkata Knight Riders, as usual have been different and creative with their picks, but just like the last couple of seasons, they arguably have the least threatening top-order.

Off to good start

In their first attempt, Lucknow and Ahmedabad have managed to assemble not just a good squad, but also have a ready XI in place. Lucknow, especially, have managed to get their hands on as many multi-dimensional players as possible. Gujarat have gone in for a fully youthful squad and added Wriddhiman Saha only at the end to cover all their bases.

TEAMS AT A GLANCE

RCB Virat Kohli 15 Cr, Glenn Maxwell 11 Cr, Harshal Patel 10.75 Cr, Wanindu Hasaranga, 10.75 Cr, Josh Hazlewood 7.75 Cr, Faf du Plessis 7 Cr, Mohammed Siraj 7 Cr, Dinesh Karthik 5.50 Cr, Anuj Rawat 3.4 Cr, Shahbaz Ahmad 2.4 Cr, David Willey 2 Cr, Sherfane Rutherford 1 Cr, Mahipal Lomror 95 L, Finn Allen 80 L, Jason Behrendorff 75 L, Siddarth Kaul 75 L, Karn Sharma 50 L, Suyash Prabhudessai 30 L, Chama Milind 25 L, Akash Deep 20 L, Aneeshwar Gautam 20 L, Luvnith Sisodia 20 L

In a reversal of sorts, their pace attack, led by the vastly-improved (in this format) Josh Hazlewood, grabs eyeballs. In Harshal Patel, Mohd Siraj and Wanindu Hasaranga that's a dependable core. They need that because their batting probably lacks that ballast with only Glenn Maxwell capable of exploding at the back end. Much will also depend on Dinesh Karthik to finish in the familiar absence of established Indian middle-order batters. And does Faf du Plessis still have the appetite to lead a side?

MUMBAI INDIANS Rohit Sharma 16 Cr, Ishan Kishan 15.25 Cr, Jasprit Bumrah 12 Cr, Tim David 8.25 Cr, Suryakumar Yadav 8 Cr, Jofra Archer 8 Cr, Kieron Pollard 6 Cr, Dewald Brevis 3 Cr, Daniel Sams 2.6 Cr, Tilak Varma 1.7 Cr, Murugan Ashwin 1.6 Cr, Tymal Mills 1.5 Cr, Jaydev Unadkat 1.3 Cr, Riley Meredith 1 Cr, Fabian Allen 75 L, Mayank Markande 65 L, Sanjay Yadav 50 L, Basil Thampi 30 L, Arjun Tendulkar 30 L, Ramandeep Singh 20 L, Aryan Juyal 20 L, Hrithik Sholeen 20 L, Rahul Buddhi 20 L, Arshad Khan 20 L, Anmolpreet Singh 20 L

If heat is your thing, this is the team for you. With an already strong Indian spine (Rohit Sharma, Suryakumar Yadav, Ishan Kishan and Jasprit Bumrah) further supplemented by the likes of Tim David and Tymal Mills, they are ideally placed to challenge in 2022. The signings of Dewald Brevis and the injured Jofra Archer also suggest they want to build a team capable of creating a dynasty. One potential weakness is the absence of an established spinner.

PUNJAB KINGS Mayank Agarwal 12 Cr, Liam Livingstone 11.5 Cr, Kagiso Rabada 9.25 Cr, Shahrukh Khan 9 Cr, Shikhar Dhawan 8.25 Cr, Jonny Bairstow 6.75 Cr, Odean Smith 6 Cr, Rahul Chahar 5.25 Cr, Arshdeep Singh 4 Cr, Harpreet Brar 3.8 Cr, Vaibhav Arora 2 Cr, Raj Angad Bawa 2 Cr, Nathan Ellis 75 L, Prabhsimran Singh 60 L, Rishi Dhawan 55 L, Sandeep Sharma 50 L, Bhanuka Rajapaksa 50 L, Benny Howell 40 L, Jitesh Sharma 20 L, Ishan Porel 25 L, Atharva Taide 20 L, Ansh Patel 20 L, Baltej Singh 20 L, Writtick Chatterjee 20 L, Prerak Mankad 20 L

Under a celebrated analyst, they have made a serious claim to have won the auctions. Strong Indian openers, six-hitting overseas middle-order who also do secondary work (Liam Livingstone as all-sorts spinner, Jonny Bairstow as keeper and Odean Smith as an all-rounder) and an uncapped Indian finisher (Shahrukh Khan). That's a winning strategy right there. A what if, though, is Kagiso Rabada. In this format, he has sometimes gone for plenty.

SRH Kane Williamson 14 Cr, Nicholas Pooran 10.75 Cr, Washington Sundar 8.75 Cr, Rahul Tripathi 8.5 Cr, Romario Shepherd 7.75 Cr, Abhishek Sharma 6.5 Cr, Marco Jansen 4.2 Cr, Kartik Tyagi 4 Cr, Abdul Samad 4 Cr, Umran Malik 4 Cr, T Natarajan 4 Cr, Aiden Markram 2.6 Cr, Sean Abbott 2.4 Cr, Glenn Phillips 1.5 Cr, Shreyas Gopal 75 L, Fazalhaq Farooqi 50 L, Vishnu Vinod 50 L, Priyam Garg 20 L, Saurabh Dubey 20 L, Shashank Singh 20 L, R Samarth 20 L, J Suchith 20 L

They have bet their immediate future on young uncapped Indians and it's for this reason why this franchise is worth following. However, there could be a struggle to pick their overseas quota in all matches. With Nicholas Pooran and Kane Williamson, provided his elbow cooperates, as two of the four, who will be the other two? What's going for them is a bankable Indian bowling core but the inexperienced and uncapped batting contingent may feel the pressure from the word go.

KKR Shreyas Iyer 12.25 Cr, Andre Russell 12 Cr, Varun Chakravarthy 8 Cr, Nitish Rana 8 Cr, Venkatesh Iyer 8 Cr, Pat Cummins 7.25 Cr, Shivam Mavi 7.25 Cr, Sunil Narine, 6 Cr, Sam Billings 2 Cr, Umesh Yadav 2 Cr, Alex Hales 1.5 Cr, Tim Southee 1.5 Cr, Mohammad Nabi 1 Cr, Ajinkya Rahane 1 Cr, Sheldon Jackson 60 L, Rinku Singh 55 L, Ashok Sharma 55 L, Chamika Karunaratne 50 L, Abhijeet Tomar 40 L, Anukul Roy 20 L, Pratham Singh 20 L, Rasikh Salam 20 L, Ramesh Kumar 20 L, Baba Indrajith 20 L, Aman Khan 20 L

In terms of squad building, they had to salvage their Sunday after they splurged on Saturday. In essence, it's a bit lop-sided in how they allocated their funds (including the retained, seven of their players cost them at least Rs 7.25 cr). As a team, it's okay but it could easily have been bettered. Do not be in a big hurry to invest in them and there will also be question marks on the fitness of Andre Russell. They will also hope that both Shreyas Iyer and Pat Cummins, who will join late, will inspire.

LSG KL Rahul 17 Cr, Avesh Khan 10 Cr, Marcus Stoinis 9.2 Cr, Jason Holder 8.75 Cr, Krunal Pandya 8.25 Cr, Mark Wood 7.5 Cr, Quinton de Kock 6.75 Cr, Deepak Hooda 5.75 Cr, Manish Pandey 4.6 Cr, Ravi Bishnoi 4 Cr, Evin Lewis 2 Cr, Dushmantha Chameera 2 Cr, K Gowtham 90 L, Ankit Rajpoot 50 L, Kyle Mayers 50 L, Shahbaz Nadeem 50 L, Manan Vohra 20 L, Mohsin Khan 20 L, Karan Sharma 20 L, Mayank Yadav 20 L, Ayush Badoni 20 L

If the league is decided on the strength of first XIs, the new franchise could well be the team to beat. They set their stall out on Saturday with eye-catching signings and added a few back-up options on Sunday. Their strength lies in the Indian all-rounders, who are likely to fill up the middle-order. But Mark Wood, who's injury prone, will have to carefully managed considering he will be coming off a tour from West Indies. A plethora of quality all-rounders could offset that. Also, will KL Rahul be liberated or will he focus on another run-accumulating campaign?

CSK Ravindra Jadeja 16 Cr, Deepak Chahar 14 Cr, MS Dhoni 12 Cr, Moeen Ali 8 Cr, Ambati Rayudu 6.75 Cr, Ruturaj Gaikwad 6 Cr, Dwayne Bravo 4.4 Cr, Shivam Dube 4 Cr, Chris Jordan 3.6 Cr, Robin Uthappa 2 Cr, Adam Milne 1.9 Cr, Mitchell Santner 1.9 Cr, Rajvardhan Hangargekar 1.5 Cr, Prashant Solanki 1.2 Cr, Devon Conway 1 Cr, Maheesh Theekshana 70 L, Dwaine Pretorius 50 L, Tushar Deshpande 20 L, KM Asif 20 L, Subhranshu Senapati 20 L, Bhagath Varma 20 L, Mukesh Choudhary 20 L, N Jagadeesan 20 L, C Hari Nishaanth 20 L, Simarjeet Singh 20 L

Away from the limelight, the defending champions have potentially rescued the season with four astute overseas signings (Devon Conway, Adam Milne, Chris Jordan and Maheesh Theekshana). The trio were signed for Rs 7.2 cr and at least two of those four could figure prominently. As long as Rituraj Gaikwad and Moeen Ali, two players who fill highly specific roles in this side, recapture their 2021 form, they will tick along. The one glaring hole, though, is many of the players they picked are in the November or December of their careers.

RR Sanju Samson 14 Cr, Jos Buttler 10 Cr, Prasidh Krishna 10 Cr Shimron Hetmyer 8.5 Cr, Trent Boult 8 Cr, Devdutt Padikkal 7.75 Cr, Yuzvendra Chahal 6.5 Cr, Ravichandran Ashwin 5 Cr, Yashasvi Jaiswal 4 Cr, Riyan Parag 3.8 Cr, Navdeep Saini 2.6 Cr, Nathan Coulter-Nile 2 Cr, James Neesham 1.5 Cr, Karun Nair 1.4 Cr, Rassie van der Dussen 1 Cr, Daryl Mitchell 75 L, Obed McCoy 75 L, KC Cariappa 30 L, Tejas Baroda 20 L, Anunay Singh 20 L, Kuldeep Sen 20 L, Dhruv Jurel 20 L, Kuldip Yadav 20 L, Shubham Garhwal 20 L.

Just in terms of their overseas acquisitions, they picked four in the last 10 minutes, a curious strategy. With availability concerns over Trent Boult and Jos Buttler, two of their bigger stars, it suggests some muddled thinking but Rassie van der Dussen is an interesting pick in the middle-order. Where they did well is their collection of lead Indian spinners and young but talented Indian pace attack The holes, though, include an established death overs pacer. In short, a few question marks.

DC Rishabh Pant 16 Cr, Shardul Thakur 10.75 Cr, Axar Patel 9 Cr, Prithvi Shaw 7.5 Cr, Mitchell Marsh 6.5 Cr, Anrich Nortje 6.5 Cr, David Warner 6.25 Cr, Khaleel Ahmed 5.25 Cr, Chetan Sakariya 4.2 Cr, Rovman Powell 2.8 Cr, KS Bharath 2 Cr, Mustafizur Rahman 2 Cr, Kuldeep Yadav 2 Cr, Kamlesh Nagarkoti 1.1 Cr, Mandeep Singh 1.1 Cr, Lalit Yadav 65 L, Lungi Ngidi 50 L, Tim Seifert 50 L, Praveen Dubey 50 L, Sarfaraz Khan 20 L, Ashwin Hebbar 20 L, Vicky Ostwal 20 L, Yash Dhull 50 L, Ripal Patel 20 L

A top four that's genuinely the envy of the league. Between them, they can take down pace, spin, accumulate as well as finish. Their 5 and 6 though, may suffer if the mercurial duo of Sarfaraz Khan and Rovman Powell don't sparkle. The intriguing aspect about their set-up is the fast-bowling department. It has a clear leader (Anrich Nortje) but the others are either injury prone or yet to do it at this level on a consistent level. Kuldeep Yadav's numbers could be a potential subplot.

GT Hardik Pandya 15 Cr, Rashid Khan 15 Cr, Lockie Ferguson 10 Cr, Rahul Tewatia 9 Cr, Shubman Gill 8 Cr, Mohammed Shami 6.25 Cr, Yash Dayal 3.2 Cr, R Sai Kishore 3 Cr, David Miller 3 Cr, Abhinav Manohar 2.6 Cr, Alzarri Joseph 2.4 Cr, Matthew Wade 2.4 Cr, Jason Roy 2 Cr, Jayant Yadav 1.7 Cr, Vijay Shankar 1.4 Cr, Dominic Drakes 1.1 Cr, Gurkeerat Mann 50 L, Varun Aaron 50 L, Noor Ahmad 30 L, Pradeep Sangwan 20 L, Darshan Nalkande 20 L, Sai Sudarshan 20 L,

Made a few meh signings in the back of the auctions, including two keepers. If Hardik Pandya is fit to bowl, it will make a big difference to the balance of the side that has four eye-grabbing bowlers, including the exciting R Sai Kishore. One can reasonably assume that Jason Roy is the only overseas batter who will start so the onus will be on Indian batters. The strength though lies in the eight overs of Lockie Ferguson and Rashid Khan, both of whom operate just after the end of the power plays.

Winter Oly: Arif 45th in testing conditions

Arif Mohd Khan during the second run of the men's giant slalom at the Winter Olympics, on Sunday | AP

PTI @ Beijing

INDIA'S lone participant in the Winter Olympics, alpine skier Arif Khan, finished 45th in the giant slalom event here.

The 31-year-old from Baramulla district in Jammu and Kashmir clocked a combined time of 2 minute 47.24 seconds from two races in difficult weather conditions at the Yanqing National Alpine Skiing Centre.

Khan, who was making his Winter Olympics debut, ended at 53rd in Race 1 with a time of 1:22.35 out of the 54 competitors who could finish it. As many as 33 skiers could not finish Race 1 while two did not start. Khan queued up 85th in the start list of 89 athletes from 62 nations.

Khan did better in Race 2 as he clocked 1:24.89, ending at 44th out of 45 skiers who could complete it. Nine skiers failed to finish Race 2 which was delayed by nearly four hours due to bad weather.

His combined time, which saw him finish 45th overall, was 37.89 seconds behind gold winner Marco Odermatt of Switzerland who clocked a combined time of 2:09.35.

Slovenia's Zan Kranjec (2:09.54) and France's Mathieu Faivre (2:10.69) clinched the silver and bronze respectively.

Khan, the first Indian to qualify for two events in a Winter Olympics, will compete in men's slalom at the same venue on Wednesday.

RCB, short on Indians in batting front

ASHIM SUNAM @ Bengaluru

One look at the Royal Challengers Bangalore squad after the IPL mega auction, it is a case of old wine in a new bottle with problems aplenty. The auction provides a wonderful opportunity for teams to make wholesome changes in the squad to form a title-winning team, but Bangalore have failed to pick quality Indian players, which could hurt them.

Though Bangalore did avail the services of Harshal Patel (10.75cr) and Dinesh Karthik (5.50 cr), rest of the Indian players, including Mahipal Lomror, Shahbaz Ahmed among others, which they bought at the auction, will not instill fear amongst their opponents.

Even when they wanted Indian players, they were outbid with other teams having a bigger purse. So, why did it come to that? One reason could be their splurge on Sri Lanka spinner Wanindu Hasaranga, who can also bat, for 10.75cr when Yuzvendra Chahal, who has been a fine servant for Bangalore in the past, name had not been called out. The latter was signed by Rajasthan Royals for 6.5cr.

Similarly, with RCB also in need of an explosive opener and a captain, they did not even put in a bid for David Warner, who was taken at a steal price by Delhi Capitals for 6.25 cr. They might have then that call as they had already signed Faf Du Plessis, who could lead the team next season. However, the team management have not finalised the captain yet and coach Mike Hesson, on Saturday, said they will 'make a decision regarding captaincy after the auction.'

Irrespective of who leads the team, the captain has a huge task ahead with the franchise not able to fill the gaping hole left by their stalwart AB de Villiers. It also means, their big players, including Virat Kohli, Glenn Maxwell (both retained) and new man Du Plesis will be under sheer pressure to deliver. From the present squad, it looks incredibly difficult to find a decent batter at No 3 and 6. The team lacks a solid finisher at six or seven as well. It was one of the problems last season. They might have to depend on the 36-year-old Karthik for cameos. It will be interesting if David Willey will be given that role.

If there is anything that the franchise can be happy about is their pacers department. With Mohammed Siraj already retained, the likes of Patel, Willey, Josh Hazlewood, Jason Behrendorff and Siddharth Kaul add the much needed quality and firepower. But, they do lack a quality spinner. Barring Hasaranga, they do not have much quality in their spin department. It could lead to problems with team combinations too.

EXPRESS READ

Mumbai demolish Odisha, move to 4th

FATORDA: A commanding display from Mumbai City FC saw them secure a 4-1 win over Odisha FC in the ISL at the PJN Stadium in Fatorda on Sunday. A brace each from Igor Angulo (41', 70') and Bipin Singh (47', 73') was enough to cancel Jonathas' (90+1') goal and secure three points that lift the club to the fourth position on the table. On the other hand, the Kalinga Warriors are left licking their wounds as they remain stuck in seventh place.

Opelka tops Isner in historic tiebreaker

LOS ANGELES: Reilly Opelka fired 39 aces and held on through the longest tiebreaker in ATP Tour history to beat John Isner 7-6 (9/7), 7-6 (24/22) Saturday to reach the final of the Dallas Open. The decisive 46-point tiebreaker in the second set was the longest in a tour-level match since the start of the ATP Tour in 1990. Opelka, the second seed, finally put it away on his eighth match point.

Liverpool close gap on City, Spurs rocked

AFP @ London

LIVERPOOL kept the pressure on Premier League leaders Manchester City as Fabinho sealed a 1-0 win over Burnley, while Tottenham's top four bid suffered a fresh blow in a 2-0 loss to Wolves on Sunday.

Fabinho struck late in the first half at windswept Turf Moor to give Liverpool their fourth successive league victory. Liverpool are nine points behind City with one game in hand as the Reds refuse to let the title race become a prolonged coronation for Pep Guardiola's men. City made it 14 wins from their last 15 league games on Saturday as Raheem Sterling's hat-trick inspired a 4-0 win at lowly Norwich.

But Guardiola is convinced Liverpool will push the champions all the way to the finish line and the way they ground out a hard-fought success against bottom of the table Burnley suggests he is right not to count them out. Reds boss Jurgen Klopp welcomed back Sadio Mane for his first appearance since helping Senegal win the African Cup of Nations. On a wet afternoon in Lancashire, Burnley were in aggressive mood, with Alisson Becker forced to save Josh Brownhill's swirling strike. Burnley's Wout Weghorst should have done better than produce a tame chip when he burst clean through on goal.

After a shaky start, Fabinho restored order for Liverpool before half-time. He poked home a fifth goal in his last seven games after Mane headed on Trent Alexander-Arnold's corner.

In London, Tottenham lost a second successive home game as Wolves followed Southampton's victory on Wednesday. Spurs side dropped to eighth place, four points adrift of the Champions League places.

Results: Saturday: Norwich **0-4** Man City. **Sunday:** Burnley **0-1** Liverpool; Newcastle **1-0** Aston Villa; Tottenham **0-2** Wolves.

TENNIS

Tseng beat Gojo to clinch Bengaluru Open in style

ENS/AGENCIES @ Bengaluru

CHINESE Taipei's Chun-hsin Tseng is making the right noises at the tennis circuit. After winning his maiden Challenger title late last year in Portugal, the 20-year old delivered his A-game to beat qualifier Borna Gojo of Croatia and clinch the Bengaluru Open at KSLTA Stadium on Sunday. He won the final 6-4, 7-5 with the match lasting for 104 minutes.

The former French Open and Wimbledon junior title holder might not have started on a great note, but managed to win the contest 6-4. The second set was an intriguing one with Gojo playing some aggressive tennis coupled with deft cross court drop shots, helping him take 5-2 lead. That is when the Asian player showed some great character to win five games in a row.

He was also gifted some points by Gojo, who lost his serve in the ninth game due to two double faults and once again lost his serve in the 11th game after being two game points up. The agility and the manner in which Tseng put the ball back into the court was the key factor for the champion.

"It was a little bit up and down. It was difficult to adjust initially and control the ball as it was getting dark and fast. I knew he had a good serve but I had to keep making longer rallies. After 2-5 down, I told myself to relax and keep going," said Tseng, who pocketed $7,200 and 80 ATP ranking points while Gojo earned $4,240 and 50 ranking points.

Chun-hsin Tseng with Bengaluru Open title on Sunday | ASHISHKRISHNA HP

Nitin, Sriram move to final round of qualifying

Nitin Kumar Sinha and N Sriram Balaji recorded upset victories to march into the final round of qualifying in the Bengaluru Open 2 ATP Challenger that got underway at the KSLTA Stadium here on Sunday as well. Nitin defeated Kai Wehnelt (GER) 3-6,7-7 (9), 6-3 in a close encounter while Sriram came back well in the last two sets to edge past Gabriel Decamps (BRA) 4-6, 6-1, 6-4 advance to the next round.

The US Cybersecurity and Infrastructure Security Agency has warned that threat actors are actively exploiting new vulnerabilities coming from top tech companies like Microsoft, Oracle, Apache and Apple, among others

The Omicron strain of the Covid-19 may lead to neurological complications much like other Covid variants, according to founder and chief executive of DNKOM research center Andrey Isaev

EXFILE • MEDICINE

Now, doggos to detect Covid

Recent research by scientists from Florida International University shows that dogs can be trained to successfully recognise unique volatile organic compounds, called "biomarkers," in the exhaled breath of patients with certain diseases including Covid. Here's a brief on the study and what lies ahead

THE STUDY

The scientists hypothesised that people infected with Covid would release specific VOCs, and that a well-trained odour detection dog would be able to tell these biomarkers apart

They obtained face masks from hospitalised patients with confirmed Covid diagnoses, as well as from those who tested negative

Four dogs were then trained to respond to Covid positive masks, while ignoring the negative and unused masks. In the process, the dogs learned to tell the difference between biomarkers originating from Covid breath and from non-Covid breath

One of the training tools the scientists used was a scent detection wheel. They placed both positive and negative masks in cans with small holes in the lids, which were attached to the ends of the wheel's arms. The dogs then walked around the wheel sniffing the VOCs coming out of these holes

After 40 double-blind trials—meaning that the people training the dogs didn't know which masks were which—we found that each of the four dogs in this study accurately detected Covid positive masks more than 90% of the time

300 MN

With up to 300 million scent receptors, dogs are among the best smell detectors in the animal world. The human nose, by comparison, contains only around 6 million scent receptors. Dog brains also devote 40% more brain space than humans to analyse odours

Versatile sniffers

Dogs can detect illegal drugs, agricultural pests to missing persons, endangered wildlife species and more through sniffing. They accomplish this by successfully recognising the odours of substances called volatile organic compounds (VOCs) that are specifically associated with these targets

What are VOCs?

Volatile organic compounds can be produced by living organisms as well as by natural or synthetic materials. In humans, they are produced by the body's metabolic activity, then enter the bloodstream and are finally released into the air through blood, urine, faeces, skin or breath

This photo taken on September 27 last year shows a dog sniffing a sample from Covid-19 coronavirus patients during a training session at the Cambodian Mine Action Centre (CMAC) in Kampong Chhnang province, where Cambodia's anti-landmine authorities are training dogs to detect Covid-19

TOP DOGS

Mac, a Terrier mix, got it right in **96.2%** of attempts. Cobra, a Belgian Malinois, was correct **99.4%** of the time. One Betta, a Dutch Shepherd, got it right in **98.1%** of attempts, and Hubble, a Border Collie mix, **96.3%** of the time.

After the study, Cobra and One Betta went to work at the State Emergency Operation Command Centre, in Tallahassee, Florida, screening for COVID-19 on surfaces. In May 2021, both dogs also put their COVID-19 detection skills to work at the annual Food and Wine Festival in Miami

Cobra, a Belgian Malinois

WHAT LIES AHEAD?

The team hopes to identify the exact biomarkers that they're detecting. To accomplish this, they are continuing to analyse both Covid positive and negative masks in the laboratory. Pinning down which biomarkers are linked to the pandemic will help in developing materials and training aids for teaching other dogs how to detect the disease

Karakoram region glaciers stable, rest melting fast

Waning chunks of ice affect the water budget downstream & increase chances of flash flood

ENVIRONMENT

NEW DELHI: Glaciers in the Karakoram region are in a stable condition, but those feeding the Ganga and the Brahmaputra river basins are melting at a faster rate, the Earth Sciences Ministry has said.

In reply to a written question in the Lok Sabha, the ministry said the mean retreat rate of the Hindukush Himalayan glaciers was 14.9-15.1 metres per annum, which varied from 12.7-13.2 metres per annum in the Indus, 15.5-14.4 metres per annum in the Ganga and 20.2-19.7 metres per annum in the Brahmaputra river basins.

However, glaciers in the Karakoram region have shown comparatively minor length change, indicating the stable condition," the ministry said, citing studies carried out by various institutions associated with the ministry.

The ministry, through its autonomous institute National Centre for Polar and Ocean Research (NCPOR), has been monitoring six glaciers in the Chandra basin (2,437 square kilometre area) in western Himalaya since 2013.

The Geological Survey of India has taken up a project on melting of glaciers in the Beas Basin, South Chenab basin and the Chandra Basin in Himachal Pradesh, and the Shyok and Nubra basin in Ladakh during Field Season 2021-22.

It said the Wadia Institute of Himalayan Geology (WIHG) was monitoring a few glaciers in Uttarakhand which reveal that the Dokriani Glacier in the Bhagirathi basin was retreating at 15-20 metre/annum (mpa) since 1995, whereas Chorabari Glacier in the Mandakini basin was retreating at 9-11 mpa during 2003-2017. WIHG was also monitoring Durung-Drung and Pensilungpa glaciers in Suru basin, Ladakh.

New planet discovered around Sun's closest star

SPACE

BERLIN: A team of astronomers using the European Southern Observatory's Very Large Telescope (ESO's VLT) in Chile have found evidence of another planet orbiting Proxima Centauri, the closest star to our Solar System.

Proxima Centauri is the closest star to the Sun, lying just over four light years away.

The newly discovered planet, named Proxima d, orbits Proxima Centauri at a distance of about four million kilometres, less than a tenth of Mercury's distance from the Sun.

This candidate planet is the third detected in the system and the lightest yet discovered orbiting this star. At just a quarter of Earth's mass, the planet is also one of the lightest exoplanets ever found.

These findings are published in *Astronomy & Astrophysics* journal. "The discovery shows that our closest stellar neighbour seems to be packed with interesting new worlds, within reach of further study and future exploration," said Joao Faria, a researcher at the Instituto de Astrofisica e Ciencias do Espaco, Portugal. Proxima d orbits between the star and the habitable zone—the area around a star where liquid water can exist at the surface of a planet—and takes just five days to complete one orbit around Proxima Centauri.

The star system is already known to host two other planets: Proxima b, a planet with a mass comparable to that of Earth that orbits the star every 11 days and is within the habitable zone, and candidate Proxima c, which is on a longer five-year orbit around the star.

15K-20K cases within expectation: Singapore

COVID

SINGAPORE: Singapore's Health Minister has said that 15,000-20,000 infections per day is something within expectations in the city-state and the recent rise in Covid-19 cases was not unexpected given that the Omicron variant is highly transmissible.

Singapore reported 10,505 new COVID-19 cases on Saturday, the fourth time this week that daily infections have exceeded the 10,000 mark. It also reported eight deaths linked to the virus.

"Omicron is highly transmissible so reaching 15,000-20,000 or more is something within our expectations. So far, it's been that. It's been staying around 10,000 for some days, which gives us some comfort," *Channel News Asia* quoted Health Minister Ong Ye Kung as saying on Saturday.

Despite the increase in cases, Ong noted that the city state's healthcare system is still holding up. "But as we have mentioned many times, the top line is much less important. The top line is important in the sense that we know where we are on the epidemic curve, that is still important information. But what's more important is the impact on the healthcare capacity," said Ong.

"The percentage of people requiring oxygen has remained the same. So the numbers have not changed. The number of patients that require oxygen remains at 0.3 per cent. (The) number of patients that needed ICU, or unfortunately passed away is about 0.05 per cent. So we are looking at a level much much lower than Delta, so our healthcare system is still holding up," the Health Minister said.

He added that although there has been a rise in the number of people visiting general practitioners (GPs) due to COVID-19, many of them had "mild or no symptoms" and are visiting clinics for various reasons. The weekly infection growth rate is 1.54, down from Friday's 1.74, according to the latest infection statistics on the Ministry of Health (MOH) website. The eight fatalities reported on Saturday is the highest number in more than two months.

Cage-free eggs becoming the norm in US

POULTRY

DES MOINES: Without much fuss and even less public attention, the nation's egg producers are in the midst of a multibillion-dollar shift to cage-free eggs that is dramatically changing the lives of millions of hens.

In a decade, the percentage of hens in cage-free housing has soared from 4% in 2010 to 28% in 2020, and that figure is expected to more than double to about 70% in the next four years. The change marks one of the welfare movement's successes after years of battles with the food industry. The transition has cost highly for producers who initially resisted calls for more humane treatment but have since fully embraced the new reality. Pushed by voter initiatives in California and other states as well as pressure from fast food restaurant chains and major grocers, egg producers are freeing chickens from cages and letting them move throughout hen houses.

DROUGHT BRINGS TO LIFE

Parts of the old village of Aceredo, submerged three decades ago when a hydropower dam flooded the valley, emerged due to the drought being experienced at the Lindoso reservoir, in northwestern Spain on Saturday. | AP

FACT OF THE MATTER

Corbevax for 12-18 year olds

COVID

Biological E has sought emergency use authorisation from India's drug regulator for its Covid vaccine Corbevax for the 12 to 18 years age group, official sources said on Sunday. The Drugs Controller General Of India has already approved Corbevax, which is India's first indigenously developed RBD protein subunit vaccine, for restricted use in emergency situation among adults on December 28. In an application sent to DCGI on February 9, Srinivas Kosaraju, head of Quality and Regulatory Affairs of Biological E Limited, said the firm had received approval for conducting phase 2/3 clinical study of Corbevax among children and adolescents aged 5-18 years in September.

Evasive Covid strains found

HEALTH

A team of Spanish researchers have identified a number of existing strains of SARS-CoV-2, as well as future variants, which have the potential to escape the immune system's cytotoxic T cell response in some portion of the population. The T cell response in humans is genetically encoded by HLA molecules—this means individuals have different HLAs, programmed to recognise invading pathogens based on different parts, or "epitopes" of the pathogens. While experimental evaluation of the immune response of every human HLA allele to every viral variant is not feasible, the team from Carlos III Health Institute turned to computational methods.

Infant vaccine meet postponed

COVID

US Food and Drug Administration on Friday announced it was postponing a meeting scheduled for next week where a panel of experts would have decided whether to endorse the Pfizer-BioNTech Covid vaccine for infants. Both the FDA and Pfizer-BioNTech now say they want to wait for results of three doses among children aged six months through four years, rather than look to authorise a two-dose series—meaning a final decision could take several more weeks. "The companies expect to have three-dose protection data available in early April," the US and German pharmaceuticals said. "Given that the study is advancing at a rapid pace, the companies will wait for the three-dose data as Pfizer and BioNTech continue to believe it may provide a higher level of protection in this age group." The news will likely disappoint many parents, who have already waited many months to immunise their families. But the decision to hold the meeting—originally scheduled for February 15—had been contentious and regarded as premature by some.

THE 4TH PILLAR

Swiss voters consider public aid plan for newspapers, media

MEDIA

GENEVA : It's a widespread lament: Traditional newspapers, especially small local ones, and other media outlets have seen subscriptions dry up as international internet behemoths have swooped in on the market for advertisements that long helped daily, weekly and monthly publications survive.

In Switzerland, the government has laid out plans to help. Swiss voters get final say Sunday in what polls have suggested is becoming an increasingly tight contest.

Voters were casting ballots on the government's plan, passed in June, to inject more than $163 million into broadcast and print media every year, including—in a first—support early-morning newspaper delivery and online media to the tune of 7nearly $76 million annually. Opponents of the plan pulled together enough signatures in a petition drive to put the issue before the public, part of Switzerland's particular form of democracy that gives voters in the country of 8.5 million a direct say in policymaking several times a year.

Foes of the plan say the cash injection would waste taxpayer money, benefit big newspaper chains and the media moguls who run them and hurt journalistic independence—by making media outlets more dependent on state handouts and thus less likely to criticise public officials. They also say it's discriminatory: Free newspapers, for example, wouldn't benefit. "A media subsidised by the state is a media under control. As the adage goes: 'Don't bit the hand that feeds you,'" wrote the opponents who pressed for the referendum. They say big print-media groups together took in more than 300 mn in profits in 2020, even during the Covid crisis.

Swiss newspapers displayed in the Media Centre of the Federal Parliament | AFP

Many other countries in Europe and beyond offer support to newspapers such as through postal fee discounts, tax breaks and other measures.

Supporters of the cash injection counter that journalism, especially in local areas that have been ill-served by big media groups, should be considered a public service.

"Media groups are fighting to survive. Ad revenues for print press haven't stopped declining or are getting swallowed up by giants like Facebook and Google, and subscriptions aren't enough," wrote the Swiss Green party, which supports the measure.

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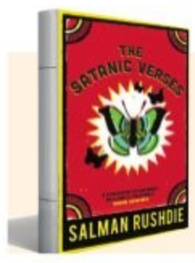

DAY'S DIARY

Fatwa against author

On this day in 1989, Iran's Ayatollah Khomeini issued a fatwa ordering the execution of author Salman Rushdie over the publication of *The Satanic Verses*

CONTROVERSY GALORE

The magic realist epic novel, published in 1988, was one of the most controversial books on release. Its satiric use of Islam struck many Muslims as blasphemous

INTO HIDING

This fatwa forced Rushdie into hiding for a decade. The Conservative government gave Rushdie round-the-clock police protection

MEANWHILE IN INDIA

On October 5, 1988, India became the first country to ban the book; invoked by the Finance Ministry. Possession of the book was then a crime

Nagashekar to direct Niranjan Sudhindra

PG 4

DONE deal

Bengaluru-based entrepreneurs who made to it reality show *Shark Tank India*, speak to *CE* about how it has impacted their lives and businesses

SANATH PRASAD

RAGHAV Jhawar and Muskan Sancheti never believed that *Shark Tank* would enter India. What was more surprising for them was their selection onto the reality show and cracking a deal with one of the 'sharks'. Founders of Bengaluru-based startup The State Plate, Jhawar and Sancheti's company sources ethnic food products from different states of India, Gujarat, Maharashtra, West Bengal, Rajasthan, Kerala among others. The duo's wish of getting funding from Lenskart founder Peyush Bansal actually came true. The sharks were impressed that the 22-year olds had both quit their jobs to venture into entrepreneurship. "We asked ₹ 65 lakh for 2 per cent but we got ₹40 lakh for 3 per cent. We understand the negotiations and are happy with the deal. We wanted to be on *Shark Tank* because it is a big platform to present our brand at prime time. More than funding, we wanted sharks' expertise in taking our vision forward," says Jhawar.

Meanwhile, Jayanti Bhattacharya, co-founder of India Hemp and Co, who was selected for the reality show, did not manage to bag a deal with the sharks. But like they say when one door closes, another opens. In Bhattacharya's case, she has been swamped with calls from investors from different countries post her appearance on the show. Bhattacharya, along with her sister Shalini Bhattacharya, founded the India Hemp and Co, a set up that specialises in nutrition-packed hemp products like Hemp Trail Mix, Hemp Protein, Hemp Hearts, Hemp oil among other products.

"The scale of the reality show was incredible. The team actually eases you into the process. My ask was ₹50 lakh for 4 per cent for a valuation of ₹12.5 crore, but I got a counter offer of ₹20 lakh for 10 per cent. I declined it. I did not want to reduce my valuation because the hemp market is growing rapidly," says Bhattacharya, adding, "Since we have hemp products for people and pets, the sharks asked me to focus on one category and review my branding strategy."

Anish Basu Roy, co-founder and CEO of TagZ Foods, whose ask was ₹70 lakh for 1 per cent, ended up striking a deal of ₹ 1.2 crore for 2.5 per cent from two sharks – Ashneer Grover, co-founder of BharatPe, a fin-tech company. Roy and Namita Thapar, CEO of Emcure Pharmaceuticals, a pharma company. "Right from the beginning, it was not so much about raising capital. We wanted to get visibility for the brand on a prime time show. Ever since we've been on the show, we have been in the top 20 keywords of Amazon under the 'snacking' category, received over 600 export enquiries, and 1,200 distributor enquiries from across the country. Moreover, we also launched a stock option for consumers to invest. We just closed the issue recently and it was oversubscribed with 4,000 consumers investing in the brand," says Roy.

(Left) Shalini and Jayanti Bhattacharya

Right from the beginning, it was not so much about raising capital. We wanted to get visibility for the brand on a prime time show. Ever since we've been on the show, our business has shot up

Anish Basu Roy, founder, TagZ Foods

(Left) Muskan Sancheti and Raghav Jhawar

(Left) Anish Basu Roy and Sagar Bhalotia

YOUNG MIND

Inspired by *Shark Tank*, PlanetSpark, a global ed-tech platform, has launched the first season of Spark Tank, an investor pitching competition. The competition was won by Bengaluru-based 11-year-old girl Prisha Aggarwal, who came up with a solution for water garbage cleaning. Aggarwal presented the idea of a 'Robo Shark', a shark-shaped robot that collects underwater trash while running on ocean salt, to the jury. She requested a capital of $10,000 to initiate her business which will largely cater to the government and MNCs in their CSR initiatives.

SHADES OF THE SEASON

Classic reds are so 'yesterday', say fashion designers, who now find denizens opting for bright and pastel colours this V-Day

ANILA KURIAN

THINK Valentine's Day, think the colour red. It's no surprise then that outfits, accessories, gifts or anything else screams this colour. But fashion designers are now seeing people veer away from this trend and instead opting for other bright or pastel colours during this season of love.

Fashion designer Mayank Modi says, "Red has become such an obvious colour for Valentine's Day that people are getting bored of it. They are opting for purple, yellow, indigo or any other bright shade."

He points out that there's a tremendous shift in the way people are dressing post the onset of the pandemic. "Over-the-top styles are so yesterday. They now want versatility. Men are wearing jackets that can be suitable for both formal and informal occasions, and women are choosing to dress with more accessories. Be it a choker or a cape that's embroidered, people are dressing in a way that they can style the same outfit in different ways throughout the day," explains Modi.

White remains an all-time favourite and Shloka Sudhakar, fashion designer, vouches for that. "The style of matching outfits is long gone now. Wearing outfits that are comfortable, lounge-styled and easy-to-wear have become go-to options," she says, adding that lace fabrics are preferred for both brunch and a night-out these days. "Flowy outfits and high slits are becoming very popular these days. Pairing different fabrics as dresses, pants or crop tops is also a style that people are opting for now," says Sudhakar.

Shopmb.in owner Madhurima Bhattacharjee says "effortless" is the buzzword this Valentine's Day. Giving her recommendations to look stylish, she says, "Wear a quirky monotone polka-dotted shift dress for a day look. For the night, keep the look minimal and chick in a black one-shoulder handloom cotton shift dress or a fitted pink cotton silk dress. They work well if you are hanging out with your girl gang too." As for accessories, she recommends keeping it minimal. "Wear in-trend transparent heels and hold a round rattan bag for the day, and a box clutch for the night," says Bhattacharjee.

Shloka Sudhakar

Design by Mayank Modi

CITY READ

Theatre play related to lockdown to be staged

Bengaluru-based theatre group Indian Ensemble is staging a play *Jhund* (Herd) , a story about the choice of going out versus staying in. This, as two strangers are threatened by an unknown occurrence from outside. Written and directed by Chanakya Vyas, the play is inspired by two source texts – Ashok Mishra's Hindi translation of Slawomir Mrozek's play *Strip Tease* and Ghanshyam Desai's Gujarati short story, *The Crowd*. The play will be staged at Our Theatre, Koramangala on Feb 18,19,20. *For tickets, visit* bookmyshow.com

Cinema chain launches new property in B'luru

MuktaA2 Cinemas, a cinema chain has launched its first premium property in Bengaluru. It features two screens and can accommodate 912 cine buffs. The property is further aided with 3D screens, 2K projections and dolby surround sound, with an aim to offer immersive movie experience.

Debolina Ray, a Bengaluru-based food & travel blogger who runs a blog called She Knows Grub, dishes out fun food-related trivia in this weekly series. So, answer these three questions and find out how much of a foodie you are

GRUB HUB

THE QUIZ WILL BE PUBLISHED EVERY SATURDAY

Send answers to **bengalurucityexpress@gmail.com** with the subject line **'Food quiz'**

The correct answers and names of the first three respondents with right answers will be featured in *CE*. The first prize winner this week will win a voucher worth ₹ 1,000 from KFC

THE RIGHT ANSWERS

1)Kota Kachori and Delhi Durbar 2)Bombay Brasserie & Bombay Borough 3)Taaza Thindi & Arogya Ahaara

FIRST 3 TO GET IT RIGHT

1) Devyani Krishna 2) Gitanjali M 3) Praveen

***Conditions apply**

Gifts for HIM

Why should girls have all the fun? This V-Day, surprise your partner with presents that will bring a smile on his face. Here are *CE's* top five picks

SAY A LITTLE PRAYER FOR ME

Give your loved one something precious. City-based jewellery designer Pallavi Foley's latest line of men's bracelets is something you can explore. You can inscribe a prayer of your choice on it – the Gayatri mantra or a verse from the Quran. The silver bracelet is priced at ₹10,000, while an 18k gold bracelet with diamonds is available at `50,000.
DETAILS: 7259669103

BEARD CARE

If a good hair day lifts up a girl's mood, the equivalent is a well-groomed beard for a man. If your partner loves his beard, the Singh Styled's True Beardman's essential pouch can be a great gifting option. The daily essentials' kit comes with a range of products, Beard Nourisher, Beard Freshener, Kesh Healer, Beard & Body Soap, Beard & Hair Shampoo, and a Premium Beard Brush, all of them in a stylish waterproof carry pouch. The kit is currently priced at `1999.
DETAILS: singhstyled.com

'HIDE'ING LOVE

Nothing impresses a man better than seamless and well-made leather goods. Nappa Dori's Travel Equipment collection hits the right spot. The collection has lightweight travel suitcases to help you navigate the airport effortlessly. The suitcases that are inspired from history yet designed for today's sensibilities will make your man travel in style.
DETAILS: nappadori.com

INTO THE WOODS

It's the second month of a stressful year and all your man could really be looking forward to is a holiday, away from the hustle and bustle of the city. Ayatana, a luxurious resort in Kodagu, could prove to be an ultimate getaway. Located amidst nature, one can experience a private candle light dinner, romantic brunch, outdoor foot reflexology and much more.
DETAILS: ayatana.com

'SWEET'HEART

If your beloved is one with a sweet tooth, then chocolates are something that never go out of fashion. Luxury chocolate brand Smoor gives you many options to unleash your love. A box of heart-shaped macaroons or a Valentine's Day-special hamper, the options are varied. The range starts from `999 onwards. **DETAILS:** smoor.in

CONTEMPORARY TUTORIALS

Terence Lewis Professional Training Institute brings its expertise to you now in the comfort of your home. Get yourself a choreographer who will teach you to grove to the music. **When:** Ongoing **Details:** insider.in

WORK FROM MUSEUM

Tired of working from home? Work out of a museum at Indian Music Experience and make a change to your work environment. **When:** Feb 15-27 **Details:** bookmyshow.com

HEALTH IS WEALTH

Celebrate Valentine's Day by aiming for a healthy choice of things. LiveAlttLife is introducing some healthy snacking options, including sugar-free dark chocolate bark, low-carb cookies and cakes, sugar-free dark chocolate brownies and much more. **Available** at LiveAlttLife website.

KID'S PLAYGROUND

Led virtually from Sweden by Memory Wax team with a dance teacher from Attakkalari Center for Movement Arts, this 120-minute session will be packed with fun and lots of creative learning. **When:** Feb 18 **Details:** bookmyshow.com

STEP OUT OF YOUR HOME AND LAUGH OUT LOUD WITH SHAMIK SHANKAR CHUGANI, VIGNESH AND MORE. WHEN: FEB 19-26 DETAILS: BOOKMYSHOW.COM

Get fit

Looking for fun ways to stay motivated? This two-hour event will start with grilling workouts, including body weight training, HIIT and animal flow. **When:** Feb 26 **Details:** bookmyshow.com

Expert Singing

In this series of 8 episodes, participants will learn to sing verses of eight well known poets of the Nirgun and Sagun tradition. Anyone with an intermediate-level understanding of Hindustani classical music will find these sessions useful. **When:** Ongoing **Details:** insider.in

Music talk

Every Wednesday, gather around a bonfire at the end of a busy day and just jam to some of your favourite music at Lahe Lahe, Indiranagar. **When:** Feb 16-23 **Details:** bookmyshow.com

Salad Revolution

Catch up with Sonakshi Sinha and Genelia Deshmukh as they join Salad Revolution, an attempt from Team SHARAN in building a 'Culture of Health'. **When:** Feb 26 **Details:** insider.in

Flashback Friday

Head to Hard Rock Cafe to catch Souvenir Flashback Fridays with DJ Varun and enjoy an evening of music, food and cocktails. **When:** Feb 18 **Details:** bookmyshow.com

Dance it out

Want to learn Salsa and Bachata? Here is your chance to get things started with the help of a great Indian Salsera : Minoti Ramachandra and Khushboo from the Motley Dance Company. **When:** Till Feb 27 **Details:** bookmyshow.com

QUICK FIX

What's cooking

IN YOUR KITCHEN?
We are hungry for recipes with minimum ingredients and maximum flavours. Share your quick-fix with us, along with step-by-step photos, at cityexpresschn@gmail.com

MUTTON CHOPS PEPPER FRY

INGREDIENTS

- **Mutton chops:** 150 g
- **Pepper powder:** 100 g
- **Fennel powder:** 25 g
- **Garam masala:** 30 g
- **Curry leaves:** 40 g
- **Onion:** 500 g
- **Salt** to taste
- **Ginger-garlic paste:** 200 g
- **Coriander powder:** 60 g
- **Fresh coriander leaves:** 100 g

METHOD

- In a pan, fry onion till brown, then add curry leaves and whole garam masala.
- Add ginger-garlic paste, and then mutton chops.
- Cook until soft, tender. Add extra masala if required.
- Garnish with fresh coriander leaves and fried curry leaves.
- Serve with mashed potato and boiled bok choy.

— Anita Jobin, Bengaluru

SOUND BOARD

ON THE CONTRARY

Hosted by Arun Maira, a former member of the Planning Commission, the show highlights various issues that concern India's future. Experts are invited to talk about different perspectives on caste, environment, markets, agriculture, and more. The goal is to get people to find a new, shared understanding.

- On: Audible

KAHANI SUNO

Narrated by Sameer Goswami, this podcast revisits classic stories written by Jaishankar Prasad and Munshi Premchand. Goswami's storytelling is crisp and some episodes are as short as three minutes.

- On: Gaana

I HEAR YOU

The thriller podcast narrated by Aahana Kumra takes you into the world of Delhi Special Bureau's ace detective, Priyamvada Parmar, whose life changes after a brutal car crash.

- On: Spotify

WATCHA

Film critic and writer Aniruddha Guha's Watcha is a podcast for hardcore movie and TV buffs. It is an engaging and educational listen for people who are passionate about movies and television shows.

- On: Gaana

THE JOE ROGAN EXPERIENCE

Hosted by former UFC announcer and American stand-up comedian Joe Rogan, this podcast is known for its quirky, crazy topic discussions, pure laugh-out-loud moments and its slew of intriguing and interesting choice of guests.

- On: Spotify

POPULAR ON YOUTUBE

ARRAMBAM

A man, along with a computer hacker, sets off on a mission to uncover a government scandal. As the dark secrets begin to tumble out, the duo faces dangerous consequences from the people in power.

- Cast: Ajith Kumar, Arya, Taapsee Pannu, Rana Daggubati

MR AIRAVATA

Airavata, a farmer who was wronged by a few corrupt police officers, decides to take matters into his own hands and joins the police force through wrong means.

- Cast: Darshan Thoogudeepa, Prakash Raj, Urvashi Rautela, Bullet Prakash

AMRUTHA VARSHINI

Abhishek falls in love with Veena, who is married to Hemanth. Things begin to swirl out of control when an obsessed Abhishek decides to kill Hemanth to get him out of the way.

- Cast: Ramesh Aravind, Suhasini Maniratnam, Sarath Babu, Tara

SEETHARAMA KALYANA

Arya, a righteous man, falls in love with a small-town woman named Geetha, unaware of the obstacles that lie ahead for both of them.

- Cast: Nikhil Gowda, Girija Lokesh, Adithya, Chikkanna

CHAKRAVYUHA

Authorities turn a blind eye to the violence that takes place in a college at the behest of a corrupt minister. However, a student, Lohith, decides to take the law into his own hands.

- Cast: Puneeth Rajkumar, Arun Vijay, Rachita Ram, Sadhu Kokila

WHAT'S ON TED TALKS

1 YOUR BREATH IS THE MOST UNDERRATED TOOL IN YOUR BODY BY SAURABH BOTHRA

As our lives are becoming increasingly hectic, stress is a constant. In this talk, Saurabh Bothra introduces us to a counter-intuitive approach at dealing with stress whilst explaining things like how our thoughts become emotions, and our breath is the most underrated tool in our body, taking inspiration from ancient Indian manuscripts.

2 BLOCKCHAIN: THE UNDERRATED TECHNOLOGY BY NAVIN REDDY

In this talk, CEO of Telsuko will address important questions like What is Blockchain? Why do people think it's just a fad? How is solving problems which we thought have no solutions? How can it change the way we use the Internet? This talk was given at a TEDx event using the TED conference format but independently organised by a local community.

3 REFUSING TO SETTLE: THE QUARTER LIFE CRISIS BY ADAM "SMILEY" POSWOLOSKY

What is a quarter-life crisis, and how do you break through it? In this engaging and funny talk, the author of an Amazon bestseller on finding meaningful work shares the takeaways from his and other young people confronting the quarter-life crisis head-on.

4 CAREER CHANGE: THE QUESTIONS YOU NEED TO ASK YOURSELF NOW BY LAURA SHEEHAN

Having successfully navigated the challenges of finding employment in seven countries over the span of 15 years, Laura E.P. Sheehan, a US lawyer turned ex-pat career strategist, guides you through her journey and provides tips on how to find success...wherever you are.

5 WHY GREAT PEOPLE QUIT GOOD JOBS BY CHRISTIE LINDOR

Christie Lindor is a seasoned, award-winning management consultant with expertise in organisational change and digital transformation. Specialising in helping clients solve critical workforce of the future challenges, in this talk, she talks about the importance of taking up tough challenges and the importance of quitting in time.

FIT BIT

URDHVA PADMASANA IN NIRALAMBA SARVANGASANA

(UPWARD LOTUS POSE IN UNSUPPORTED SHOULDERSTAND POSE)

In Sanskrit, 'urdhva' means upward, 'padma' means lotus, 'niralamba' means unsupported, 'sarvanga' means full body and 'asana' means pose. This is one of the challenging inverted postures. The entire body is balanced on the shoulders with the legs postured in Padmasana. It can be practiced if you have mastered Sarvangasana. This asana is associated with Vishuddhi (Throat) Chakra which is the starting point of Udana Prana. it assists to speak, listen, and express yourself.

STEPS

- Lie down on your back. Keep the legs stretched out, tightened at the knees. Place your hands beside your legs, palms down.
- Take a few deep breaths. Exhale slowly and raise both legs together; bring them at a right angle to the body. Inhale here, keeping the legs steady.
- Exhale, then raise the legs further up by lifting the hips and back off the floor, pressing the palms gently against the floor.
- When the whole trunk is off the ground, bend the elbows and place the palms on the ribs, resting the shoulders well on the floor. Release the arms. Using abdominal strength, take the body deeper into the pose by stretching the legs and arms upwards and bringing the body weight to the shoulders.
- Bend the legs and come into Padmasana, fingers in Chin mudra. Stretch the crossed legs vertically up, move the knees closer to each other and the legs as far back as possible from the pelvic region.
- Stay in this pose for 20-30 seconds with deep breathing.

BENEFITS

- Opens up the inner hips and thighs, ankles and knees.
- Strengthens the arms, back muscles and shoulders.
- Stretches the neck and trunk muscles.
- Massages abdominal organs and makes the wrists flexible.
- Useful for strengthening the back muscles.
- Stimulates the brain and calms the mind down.
- Helps increase concentration and mental awareness.
- Good for the thyroid glands.

LIMITATIONS

- People with asthma, neck/shoulder injuries should avoid this. Those who have hip/back/leg injuries, must avoid this.
- People suffering from acute headache or high blood pressure should avoid this.

— by N Elumalai, PhD scholar (Yoga Science) at Meenakshi Academy of Higher Education & Research, Chennai

NOW STREAMING

REGIONAL

MAHAAN (Tamil)

Gandhi Mahaan, a school teacher, is abandoned by his family after he decides to live a life of his own, with freedom.

Cast: Vikram, Dhruv Vikram, Simran

- Watch on: Amazon Prime Video

MERSAL (Tamil)

Maaran, a doctor, is falsely arrested for the murder of his colleague, Dr Arjun Zachariah. He soon discovers that the real culprit is a lookalike who aims to expose corruption in the medical industry.

Cast: Vijay, SJ Suresh, Sathyaraj

- Watch on: Disney+ Hotstar

RAVANA LANKA (Telugu)

Four friends go to Goa to chill but one of them dies suspiciously. A few days later, one of their friend's girlfriend gets kidnapped.

Cast: Murali Sharma, Racha Ravi, Dev Gill, Krish Bandipally

- Watch on: Amazon Prime Video

HUMAN (Hindi, series)

Human portrays the underbelly of human drug testing and a world of medical scams.

Cast: Shefali Shah, Kirti Kulhari, Vishal Jethwa

- Watch on: Disney+ Hotstar

GEHRAIYAAN (Hindi)

A woman finds herself at a crossroads in life. Her six-year relationship has grown monotonous and her career seems to have hit a roadblock. However, the arrival of her cousin forces her to confront a troubled past.

Cast: Deepika Padukone, Siddhant Chaturvedi, Ananya Pandey, Dhairya Karwa

- Watch on: Amazon Prime Video

All the streaming apps can be accessed on smartphones and smart TVs with Internet connection.

RAAT AKELI HAI (Hindi)

When a newly married landlord is murdered, a misfit cop's investigation is complicated by the victim's secretive family.

Cast: Nawazuddin Siddiqui, Radhika Apte, Shweta Tripathi, Aditya Srivastava

- Watch on: Netflix

DOCTOR (Tamil)

When a military doctor tracks down his former fiancee's kidnapped niece, he discovers a complex human trafficking ring in Goa. He then weaves an intricate trap to capture the perpetrators.

Cast: Sivakarthikeyan, Priyanka Arul Mohan

- Watch on: Netflix

FOREIGN

THE POWER OF THE DOG (English)

A domineering rancher responds with cruelty when his brother brings home a new wife and her son, until the unexpected comes to pass.

Cast: Benedict Cumberbatch, Kirsten Dunst, Jesse Plemons, Kodi Smit-McPhee

- Watch on: Netflix

THE FALLOUT (English)

Bolstered by new friendships forged under sudden and tragic circumstances, high school student Vada begins to reinvent herself while reevaluating her relationships and her view of the world.

Cast: Annabelle Wallis, Mckenna Grace, George Young

- Watch on: Amazon Prime Video

MALIGNANT (English)

Madison, a young woman, is terrified by visions of the murders of strangers. Later, Madison decides to find and save the victims.

Cast: Annabelle Wallis, Mckenna Grace, George Young

- Watch on: Amazon Prime Video

TALL GIRL 2 (English)

Jodi Kreyman deals with her new found popularity. Her miscommunications, however, start causing rifts with those around her and now she really needs to "stand tall."

Cast: Ava Michelle, Griffin Gluck, Sabrina Carpenter

- Watch on: Netflix

SUBSCRIPTION

Disney+ Hotstar: ₹ 499 per year
Apple TV: ₹ 99 per month
Prime Video: ₹ 129 per month
Netflix: ₹ 149 per month

RUBINATIONS
Rubi Chakravarti
Writer, actor and funny girl

SHADOWS AND LIGHT

AS I write this column I am justifiably distracted and disturbed. My older sister was admitted for an emergency installation of a pacemaker. This is a piece of information for all those non-believers who think that being infected by Covid means a day or two of fever and a sore throat. The havoc it plays on the heart is undeniable. Rita developed a symptom called 'tracky-cardia' which eventually led to an electric impulse failure to a heart imbalance. Yet, my hero, the indomitable Rita Chakravarti grinned cheekily at us from her bed in the CCU, as I wept inconsolably.

As I look back at my upbringing I question how my mom brought us up. There is nearly a decade of age difference between my sister and me, and even though times were undeniably different, we were brought up as alpha females! We had to put in the work, and going back on one's commitment and word was not an option. We were educated, emancipated, erudite and powerful, and provided sometimes more than our normal share. mentally, emotionally and monetarily. We were 'kintsugi' (the Japanese art of mending broken pottery with gold or silver, making it whole again and more beautiful in the bargain). But as I see my beautiful sister lying prone on her hospital bed, my heart aches with an untold grief. In doing so much for everyone and everything else, we forgot supporting ourselves. Instead of being applauded, we only kept defending ourselves against onslaughts of being too demanding, too bossy, too arrogant, etc, while the entitled used the outcome of our zest, ambition, good offices and hard work quite shamelessly.

Balaji Balachander and Goutham Balasubramanian

Get well soon my hero. It's our time now.

I think the older generation is brought up to seamlessly reinvent themselves in a new avatar and stay relevant and interesting without losing their charm. My friend, Ramjee Chandran, author, theatre aficionado, editor and musician is a man like that. His new podcast strives to have a literary tête-a-tête with authors, writers, poets and people who are passionate about the written 'word'. We did an easy flowing conversation where he innocuously brought up the vulnerable and softer side of my thoughts and 'words'. I have known him for a long time and the ease of my spoken word was very noticeable during our one-on-one.

Ramjee Chandran

Kiran Soans, a brutally honest food critic, is the owner of the 'world on my plate' franchise. He is a lovable maverick who enjoys the finer things in life.be it a great coffee or a vintage bottle of wine. He periodically hosts a table (as a part of WOMP) of a 'fun-group' of people who love their food, wine and song, to try out nouvelle and unique cuisines. This weekend a small group of us were lucky to be privy to pan-Indian food at the Salt Restaurant, started by the very popular chefs Goutham Balasubramanian and Balaji Balachander. We enjoyed a great flavour profile of food from pan India, keeping the authenticity of the regions intact. No Indian food with a twist. I hate that!

Just as we were letting our guard down and getting back to work and play, the dreaded Omicron bit us directly on our respective derrieres. Though I must admit even though I was double vaccinated, I managed a bit of caution. My 'funda' was not to venture into big crowds. So no gyms (where there is an unhealthy amount of exchange of 'bodily fluids'), movie theatres, launches, marriages, etc. This highly-contagious strain had everyone nervous, till a couple of people got it and cured themselves at home! Then it became a 'like a flu' type virus. I was very careful till my favourite nephew got married. I threw caution to the winds as we celebrated a big fat Indian wedding.

Then... my sister had heart surgery. I have learned not to fear shadows as it ensures the presence of light nearby.

ACTS OF CHANGE

Actors Priyanshu Painyuli and Satish Kaushik, who are part of an asthma awareness campaign, tell *CE* about what's been keeping them busy

Satish Kaushik

ANILA KURIAN

AN awareness campaign called Berok Zindagi #InhalersHaiSahi by Cipla was launched recently where celebrities with asthma joined in. The campaign aims to eliminate the stigma around the usage of inhalers, making it socially acceptable and at the same time create a dialogue between patients and doctors. Speaking to *CE*, Mirzapur actor Priyanshu Painyuli, who was recently seen in *Rashmi Rocket* with Taapsee Pannu, points out that he's happy the film was released on an OTT platform. "Fortunately, I have had some good and different kinds of releases in the last couple of years, and I've been getting a lot of appreciation for it. People have loved all the roles. *Rashmi Rocket* was set to release in theatres but due to the pandemic, it was released on OTT. It helped our movie reach out to more people, not just in the country but across the globe," he says.

His mantra to stay positive during the pandemic has been staying close with loved ones. "On a mental health front, a lot of people who were away from their families suffered greatly. I stayed in constant touch with mine, sharing everything with them...that helped me a lot. We played online games, even though I was far away, I never felt distant from my family. I also kept my diet in check and was busy with different projects," says Painyuli, who was last seen in *Unpaused*, an anthology of stories on the happenings during the second wave. The actor is currently working on a thriller film and another war film called *Pippa* along with Ishan Khatter and Mrunal Thakur.

Veteran actor Satish Kaushik, who directed *Kaagaaz* starring Pankaj Tripathi, is also part of the campaign. Kaushik is now concentrating more on producing films with directors. "I'm also going to be directing towards the end of the year. As an actor, there are many interesting projects aligned. You'll get to see me in films like *Thar*, *Sharmaji Namkeen*, *Chatriwali*, and shows like *Guilty Minds*, *Kingmakers*, *Country Mafia*, and more," he explains. Meanwhile, he's staying positive during the pandemic with his family. "Since the pandemic, I have enjoyed spending time with my family. We played so many games like Ludo, Saanp Seedhi with my daughter Vanshik, sang karaoke and walked as much as possible," he says.

Priyanshu Painyuli

IF music be the food of love, then play on," and hence we grew up watching the movies of Keanu Reeves, Tom Cruise and Shahrukh Khan and reading the enchanting poetry of Emily Dickenson or idyllic Shakespeare and reading the amorous *Mills and Boons*. The other day I was reminiscing about my school days and was wishing that had we not watched those enigmatic movies in late '90s and early Y2K, we probably wouldn't have been so love-smitten and obsessed with the idea of love as Orsino.

Now, as I have outgrown that stage of infatuation or love, Valentine's Day truly represents so much more than just celebrating a life partner. The other day, I happened to watch the movie *Mohabbatein* again. I realised how my perceptions and focus have changed with age and time (healthily evolving I must add).

TIMELESS CLASSICS

PAIRED WITH PANACHE
Anuja Pandey
(The author is social media influencer @loftyspectrums and lifestyle coach)

This time it was not just about those young love-smitten couples. And as I made sure my kids too watched something I grew up watching, they just went on laughing and could not fathom what was going on.

The idea is to pass on not just tangible things to the next generation but this thought process, ideas, not exactly ideologies,the definition and understanding of ubiquity of the concept of love which includes mutual respect, inclusion and tolerance. Thus, I decided to give them something that symbolises and recognises the value of discipline as well as the importance of legacy of the old versus the new.

The way one generation passes on its values to the next, the same philosophy echoes in the passing on of family heirlooms and watches do make for wonderful heirlooms.

Through generations, jewellery, watches are iconic and withstand anything. My father gifted them his and my mom's watches from the '90s.

Heirloom gifts make wonderful Valentine presents. Gifting a watch to your daughter or son that was gifted to you by your previous generation is a beautiful thought for its simplicity. It's a timeless gift with utilitarian design and is ubiquitous in its appeal – cherishing the past and living the present.

For this love of old and classic, Timex has launched its new collection that is an ode to timelessness and tradition coupled with a streak of fashion that comes together with maximum utility.

Sharmila Sahai, managing director of Timex Group India, says, "We believe that every watch has a soul and when you pass on a watch to the next generation, you pass a bit of your soul with it. Through this, we have been able to bring back iconic retro themes and vintage styles back to life through our very popular reissues.

For example, the Q Timex Reissue, Marlin and more. Our 'Given For Generations' campaign celebrates the 167-year-old legacy of passionate timekeeping."

CITY READ

ELECTRIC VEHICLE BRAND GETS MOTO UPGRADE

Simple Energy unveiled an upgraded motor for its flagship scooter, Simple One, which will be delivered to customers from June onwards. The new motor boosts the performance further by offering better efficiency and thermal management. It is an upgrade to the existing high-spec motor and can produce 72 Nm of torque. This allows to scooter to house a large 4.8 kWh battery pack, providing 200+ km of range. Suhas Rajkumar, founder and CEO, said, "While we had already developed the most powerful motor last year, we found there was room for further improvement. This breakthrough is an upgrade on efficiency and performance for us as the motor is the key to a perfect EV."

ARE YOU GAME?
Anusha Ganapathi
@quofles
(This economics graduate spends her leisure time preparing for the zombie apocalypse)

EXTRACTION IS... PAINFUL

Tom Clancy's Rainbow Six Extraction" is an online multiplayer tactical shooter. It does not stray far from this one-line description. This spin-off game borrows 18 of the stupidly brave Operators from "Rainbow Six Siege". We choose one of the Operators based on their special abilities and enter head-first into dungeons of parasitic aliens. We then shoot at pulsating veins that birth disgusting alien creatures, lock some doors, and attempt to escape. Unless First-person shooter is your passion, this is not a game that you would play to "cool off" after a tiring weekday.

In Extraction, each mission involves completing three objectives in three connected sub-maps. The objectives, and the placement of the aliens vary on every entry. The objectives typically involve destroying nests, placing devices, or saving agents. At any point during this arduous journey, we can choose to "extract" and escape instantly from a horde of attacking aliens. The cost is just the wasted effort, which is not rewarded with experience points.

"Back4Blood" is a game that's most like Extraction. Only, Back4Blood is quick to give us an 'A for effort', with its simplistic hack-and-slash approach against the enemies. Extraction is a bit more demanding, expecting us to have graduate-degree expertise before a single-mission is executed to perfection. It forces us to be tactical, providing us with a range of very fancy devices to this end. There are recon drones, reinforceable doors, and sci-fi Operator abilities – ranging from holographic decoys to adrenaline boosters. It is necessary to master the learning curve with these devices, especially since we risk losing Operators permanently to the parasite (unless we rescue them later, a nightmarish mission).

My mediocre shooting skills would not allow me to continue playing this game, but it has its persuasions. The most compelling of these is its cooperative gameplay with cross-platform capability. It's us against the aliens, and "us" can execute coordinated attacks from across consoles — PC, Xbox, or the PlayStation. There's also a lack of pressure, in the sense that we don't play against foul-mouthed people online. The compensating pressure involves a time limit, and the constant fear of being clawed by a monster. 4/5 dentists would agree that Extraction is disturbingly painful. Play it only if you've already spent over 100 hours on first-person shooters.

THE NEW INDIAN EXPRESS **CLASSIFIEDS**

CHANGE OF NAME
I, **C.V.JAGADEESH** S/o **Venkataramanaswamy Reddy** R/at No.90, 1st Floor, 41st Cross, Jayanagar 8th Block, BSK 2nd Stage, Bangalore-560070 have changed my name to **C.V.JAGADESH** vide affidavit dated:12/2/2022 Before Notary **L.Puttaraju** Bangalore.

CHANGE OF NAME
I, **(OLD NAME) BABITA** Residing at No. 31/102, Mantri Residency, Kalena Agrahara Next to Prestige Notting Hill, B G Road, Bangalore-560076, have changed my Name from **(OLD NAME) BABITA** to **(NEW NAME) BABITA PAL** vide affidavit dated 12.02.2022 sworn before Notary N.Nagappa bangalore.

CHANGE OF NAME
I, **(OLD NAME) SNEH LATHA JAIN** W/o Vimal Kumar Residing at No. 19/2, Sobha Indraprastha, E-2141, Gopalpura, Minerva Mill Compound Bangalore-560023, have changed my Name from **(OLD NAME) SNEH LATHA JAIN** to **(NEW NAME) SNEH LATA** vide affidavit dated 11.02.2022 sworn before Notary B.S.Padmaprasad bangalore.

CHANGE OF NAME
I, **SUNANDA JAGADEESH** W/o **C.V.Jagadesh** R/at No.90, 1st Floor, 41st Cross, Jayanagar 8th Block, BSK 2nd Stage, Bangalore-560070 have changed my name to **S.SUNANDA** vide affidavit dated:12/2/2022 Before Notary **L.Puttaraju** Bangalore.

CHANGE OF NAME
I, **(OLD NAME) MAIHEBUBI** W/o Moulasab Jamakhandar Residing at No. 25, 4th Floor, R.K.Residency, Saleem Apartment, 1st Cross, Lalbagh Back Gate, Jayanagara 1st Block Bangalore-560011, have changed my Name from **(OLD NAME) MAIHEBUBI** to **(NEW NAME) MAHABUBI MOULASAB JAMAKHANDAR** vide affidavit dated 22.12.2021 sworn before Notary B.S.Padmaprasad bangalore.

CHANGE OF NAME
I, **(OLD NAME) SUNITA** W/o Pavan Kumar Jain Residing at No. G308, Platinum City, HMT Road, Yeshwanthpur Bangalore-560022, have changed my Name from **(OLD NAME) SUNITA** to **(NEW NAME) SUNEETA JAIN** vide affidavit dated 11.02.2022 sworn before Notary B.S.Padmaprasad bangalore.

CHANGE OF NAME
I, **SHOBHA BETAGERI** W/o **Betageri Someshwar Basavannepa,** R/at No.502, Sri Sneha Residency, Ashwath Katte Road, Chikkallasandra, Uttarahalli Hobli, Bangalore- 560061 have changed my name to **SHOBHA SOMESHWAR BETAGERI** vide affidavit dated: 11/2/2022 Before Notary **L.Puttaraju** Bangalore.

CHANGE OF NAME
I, **(OLD NAME) IMAMASAB JAMAKHANDAR** S/o Moulasab Jamakhandar Residing at No. 25, 4th Floor, R.K.Residency, Saleem Apartment, 1st Cross, Lalbagh Back Gate, Jayanagara 1st Block Bangalore-560011, have changed my Name from **(OLD NAME) IMAMASAB JAMAKHANDAR** to **(NEW NAME) IMAMASAB MOULASAB JAMAKHANDAR** vide affidavit dated 22.12.2021 sworn before Notary B.S.Padmaprasad bangalore.

CHANGE OF NAME
I, **(OLD NAME) PARVEEN IMAMSAB JAMAKHANDAR,** Residing at No. 25, 4th Floor, R.K.Residency, Saleem Apartment, 1st Cross, Lalbagh Back Gate, Jayanagara 1st Block Bangalore-560011, have changed my Name from **(OLD NAME) PARVEEN IMAMSAB JAMAKHANDAR** to **(NEW NAME) PARVEEN** vide affidavit dated 22.12.2021 sworn before Notary B.S.Padmaprasad bangalore.

CHANGE OF NAME
I, **(OLD NAME) NASREEN SIRAJ FATHIMA** Spouse of 676155 T Ex sgt Mohammed Sirajuddin Residing at No. 139/36, D-004, Victorian Haven Apartments, Patel Ramareddy Road, Domlur Layout, Bangalore-560071, have changed my Name from **(OLD NAME) NASREEN SIRAJ FATHIMA** to **(NEW NAME) NASREEN FATHIMA** vide affidavit dated 04.02.2022 sworn before Notary D.B.Ramesh Bashkar bangalore.

CHANGE OF NAME
I, **(OLD NAME) PARVEEN BEGUM** W/o Imamsab Moulasab Jamakhandar Residing at No. 25, 4th Floor, R.K.Residency, Saleem Apartment, 1st Cross, Lalbagh Back Gate, Jayanagara 1st Block Bangalore-560011, have changed my Name from **(OLD NAME) PARVEEN BEGUM** to **(NEW NAME) PARVEEN** vide affidavit dated 22.12.2021 sworn before Notary B.S.Padmaprasad bangalore.

CHANGE OF NAME
I, **RUKMANI alias RUKMINIAMMA alias RUKKAMANI W/o Mr. Munirajaiah N,** resident of House No. 22, 22nd Main, GK Naidu School, Ananthapura, Bengaluru - 560 064 have change my name from RUKMANI alias **RUKMINIAMMA** alias **RUKKAMANI to RUKKAMMA** vide affidavit dated 11.02.2022 before Notary Public G.P. CHAYA, Bangalore.

CHANGE OF NAME
I, **(OLD NAME) RANA SARVAR SYED** Residing at No. 39, King Clif Apartment, G-1, Miller's Road, Bengaluru-560046, have changed my Name from **(OLD NAME) RANA SARVAR SYED** to **(NEW NAME) RANA SARVAR** vide affidavit dated 10.02.2022 sworn before notary N.Nagappa bangalore.

CHANGE OF NAME
I, **(OLD NAME) DINESH KUMAR ARVIND** S/o Arvind Kumar Residing at No. A1601, Thanisandra Icon North Apts, Adj to Mysore North City, Kothanur Bangalore-560077, have changed my Name from **(OLD NAME) DINESH KUMAR ARVIND** to **(NEW NAME) DINESH KUMAR** vide affidavit dated 04.02.2022 sworn before Notary D.S.Chandrakanth bangalore.

CHANGE OF NAME
I, R. INDIRA BHAT P.A. No. 37568-R aged about 53 years old and working in HQTC (U), Air Force, Bangalore, W/o Sri. Rajiv P Bhat, resident of No.171, 1st Main Road, Near National Law College, Teachers Colony, Nagarabhavi, Bangalore-560072, have changed my name to **INDIRA R BHAT** vide Affidavit dated 12.02.2022 sworn to before Notary H.S. Sakalesh Aradhya, Bangalore

CHANGE OF NAME
I, **(OLD NAME) RESHMA** Residing at No. 133, 2nd Cross, Anwar Layout, Shampur Main Road, Bangalore-560045, have changed my name from **(OLD NAME) RESHMA to (NEW NAME) RESHMA NASEER AHMED** vide Affidavit dated 12.02.2022 sworn before Notary C.Sharada, Bangalore.

CHANGE OF NAME
I, **(OLD NAME) BHARATH KUMAR** S/o Pavan Kumar Jain Residing at No. G308, Platinum City, HMT Road, Yeshwanthpur Bangalore-560022, have changed my Name from **(OLD NAME) BHARATH KUMAR** to **(NEW NAME) BHARATH JAIN** vide affidavit dated 11.02.2022 sworn before Notary B.S.Padmaprasad bangalore.

AFFIDAVIT
I, **PANDURANGAN N,** Service No. 15325841Y, Rank: HAV, permanent Address Chinnamelupalli Village, Peddamelupalli Post, Krishnagiri Taluk and Dist., Tamil Nadu State-635002, presently residing at No. B-2/61, 3rd Floor, BDA Flat Kallahalli, Sivan Chetty Garden Post, Bangalore-560 042, Karnataka hereby declare that in my Army Service Records, my wife name was wrongly mentioned as **THILAGAWATHI** instead of **P. THILAGAWATHI,** henceforth she will be known and called as **P THILAGAWATHI,** vide affidavit dated 09.02.222, before Notary Public Advocate **AR Muneer Ahmed,** Bangalore.

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Nagashekar to direct Niranjan Sudhindra in an action thriller titled *Q*

The film, to be made in multiple languages, will mark the acting debut of Bhagyashree's daughter, Avantika Dasani

A SHARADHAA

ACTOR Niranjan Sudhindra is looking forward to the release of his debut, Nam Huduguru. However, his second film, titled *Superstar*, is already on the floors. Now, he has bagged his third project! Niranjan is teaming up with *Myna* and *Amar* director Nagashekar for a multilingual action thriller, titled *Q - Follows You*. The first-look poster of the film and making will be unveiled on Valentine's Day (February 14).

Nagashekar, who has a penchant for making realistic films, has based the upcoming project on many true incidents. Set in a college, the film is said to be inspired by many instances of leaked question papers and their impacts on the youth.

Q will be made in multiple languages - Kannada, Telugu, Tamil, Malayalam, and Hindi. The film will also be the acting debut of Avantika Dasani, the daughter of actor Bhagyshree and sister of Abhimanyu Dasani. The director confirmed this news to *CE*. The production house will also soon announce that Avantika is onboard *Q*

As far as the technical crew of the film, it has DOP Satya Hegde, stunt choreographer Ravi Varma, and music director Ajaneesh Loknath. The team will begin the shooting on April 1.

Director Nagashekar is also producing the film under his home banner with producer Vijay Savanur. The duo also has a Telugu project in the pipeline. Titled *Gurthunda Seethakalam* it has Tamanaah and Satyadev in the lead roles. The trailer of the Telugu film will be released today.

Director Nagashekar

Niranjan Sudhindra

Avantika Dasani

Luwak marks the debut of actor Drushya and director Yogi Aditya

CE FEATURES

YOGI Aditya marks his directorial debut with a multilingual film, titled *Luwak*. It also stars a newcomer *Drushya*. The director, sharing the first look poster with *CE*, tells us that the title is the name of a dog.

Yogi has been part of the film industry for the last 15 years and has worked with directors like Om Prakash Rao, S Mahendar, and S Narayan. He has also worked in the Tamil and Telugu film industries.

Luwak, touted to be a suspense thriller, made under the MVK Films banner, is another Kannada film that will also be released in Tamil, Telugu, and Malayalam.

The makers are in talks with Malayalam actor Priya Varrier to play the female lead. The actor, who shot to fame through *Oru Adaari Love*, is yet to give her nod to the film. The film will be launched on February 18.

Yogi Aditya

Drushya

Simu Liu in talks to join Greta Gerwig's *Barbie*

CE FEATURES

Simu Liu is in negotiations to join Greta Gerwig's next feature film *Barbie*. The film, to be directed by Greta Gerwig has already confirmed the lead cast members as Margot Robbie and Ryan Gosling, with the former as Barbie and the latter as Ken. The plot of the film is currently kept under the wrap. The project is written by Gerwig and Noah Baumbach and Robbie will also serve as one of the producers of the film.

Robbie is bankrolling the project through LuckyChap banner alongside Tom Ackerley. In addition, Mattel Films' Robbie Brenner and Paddington's David Heyman are also producing.

Liu is best-known for the show Kim's Convenience and his most recent film Shang-Chi and The Legend of The Ten Rings. He played the titular superhero in the film which grossed $432 million at the global box office making it one of the highest-grossers during the pandemic. He is also a part of two interesting feature movies. The first is a romance titled One True Loves, in which he will star opposite Hamilton star Phillipa Soo. The second is Arthur the King, in which he will be sharing screen space with Mark Wahlberg.

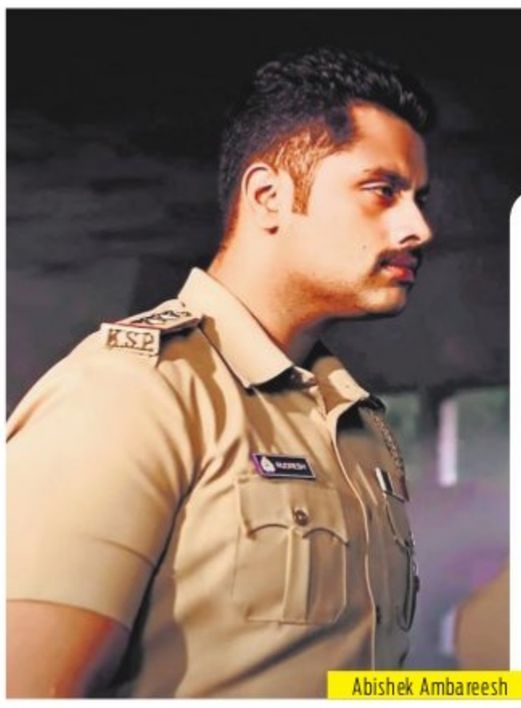
Simu Liu

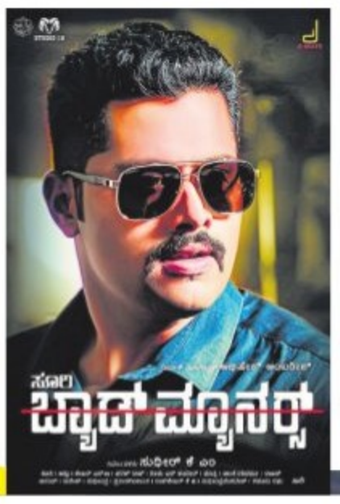
Suri-Abishek's *Bad Manners* back on track

CE FEATURES

The shooting of Suri's *Bad Manners*, starring Abishek Ambareesh, was put on hold due to the pandemic. The team will resume the 4th schedule of the shoot from today in Mysuru and Chamarajanagar. *Bad Manners* will be Abishek's second outing and his first-time collaboration with the *Tagaru* director.

The film, produced by Sudhir KM, stars Priyanka Kumar and Rachita Ram as the female leads. *Bad Manners* is said to be an action-based entertainer and will feature Abishek in the role of a police officer. The film has dialogues by Maasti, music by Charan Raj, and cinematography by Shekar S.


Abishek Ambareesh



WEB SERIES BASED ON SHORT FILM *2047* IN WORKS

CE FEATURES

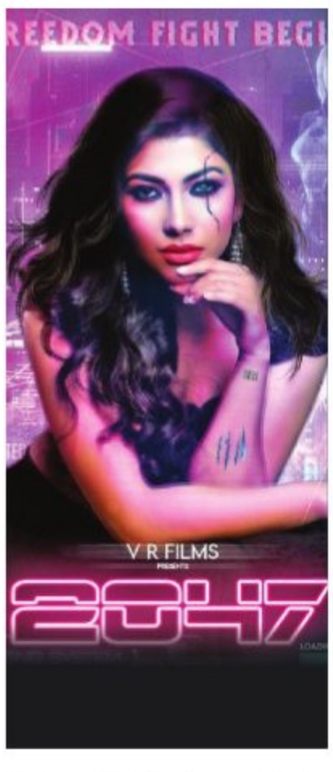
DIRECTOR Narasimha Murthy's short film *2047*, which was released on Republic Day, will now be made into a web series. This 25-minute short film is set in a dystopian world of humans and machines living in disharmony.

The director has tried to create a dystopian world in *2047*. He has used an open-source platform to make a cost-effective 15-minute VFX sequence.

2047, shot in a single day in an abandoned location, is said to be a concept-based film. It is a subplot to a bigger story on the relationships between humans and machines.

"Right now, humans spend more time with their mobile and social media than with real social relationships; and what if self-conscious AI cyborgs fulfilling all kinds of desires of humans come into their lives? This question is answered in this short film," explains Narasimha Murthy, who has handled the screenplay, editing, and VFX along with co-director Yogeshwar.

2047 stars Surya Manoharan, Ramya Krishna, and Madan. The film's music is by Venkatesh K and Adithya Nayak, and it has cinematography by Varun Dk. The makers of the short film are already in talks with many streaming channels.



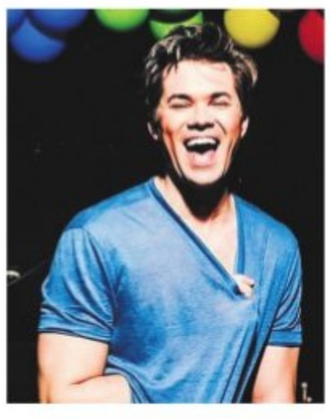
Andrew Rannells cast in limited series Immigrant from the creator of *Pam & Tommy*

CE FEATURES

Pam & Tommy creator Robert Siegel's show Immigrant casts actor Andrew Rannells in a recurring role. The other cast members who will be a part of this Hulu show include Kumail Nanjiani, Annaleigh Ashford, Murray Bartlett, Quentin Plair, and Nicola Peltz.

Immigrant will depict the rise and fall of one of the most popular American entertainment legacies -- Chippendales -- and its founder Somen 'Steve' Banerjee. It will capture Somen's journey, from how he immigrated to the US in the hopes of a better and richer life to owning a gas station near Playa del Rey and finally setting his sight on the nightlife scene. He found a club in West Hollywood that was in need of love and care.

He sunk some cast in it and kept the already popular themes intact while introducing a weekly male revue program called the Chippendales. Once word spread, the revue became one of the club's most successful themes and helped Banerjee and his team rise to popularity. Banerjee then used the help of investors to change this theme night into a brand by itself. Immigrant will capture all of this and the fall of the brand that involved love affairs, tax loopholes, and murder. The role that Rannells is expected to play in the show is that of an investor, who is really a privileged kid from New York. He would not only bring in the money but also become the love interest of the producer and the choreographer of Chippendales Nick De Noia. Nanjiani will play the titular role with Bartlett portraying the role of Nick in Immigrant. Nanjiani will also serve as one of the executive producers along with Siegel, Dylan Sellers, Jenni Konner, Matt Shakman, Emily V. Gordon, Nora Silver, and Rajiv Joseph. The show will also see Joseph serve as a writer alongside Mehar Sethi. Konner will team up with Siegel as a showrunner with Shakman set to direct.



Sophie Turner, Dane DeHaan to work together on crime thriller *Wardriver*

CE FEATURES

Dane DeHaan who was recently cast in Christopher Nolan's Oppenheimer and Sophie Turner, who is famous for her roles in Game of Thrones and *X-Men: Dark Phoenix*, will headline the film Wardriver, written and directed by Daniel Casey. He is best known for penning the script of *F9: The Fast Saga*.

Wardriver is being bankrolled by David M Wulf along with Star Thrower Entertainment's Tim White, Trevor White, and Allan Mandelbaum. Their previous projects include the Oscar-nominated King Richard starring Will Smith and The Post starring Tom Hanks and Meryl Streep.

Wardriver is about a genius, tech-savvy thief Cole (to be played by DeHaan). He has a highly specialised skill set, which he uses to rob. A criminal figures out Cole's talent for robbing and forces him to hack into the account of a seemingly wealthy young woman Sarah (to be portrayed by Sophie Turner). Their aim is to rob her account of the millions of dollars in it, but very soon Cole realises that Sarah's account has been used by a mob lawyer to hide his money. Cole hopes to bail Sarah out and so he comes up with a plan to replace the money that has been stolen. However, Cole misses red flags in Sarah's story, and is instead pulled into a web of lies.